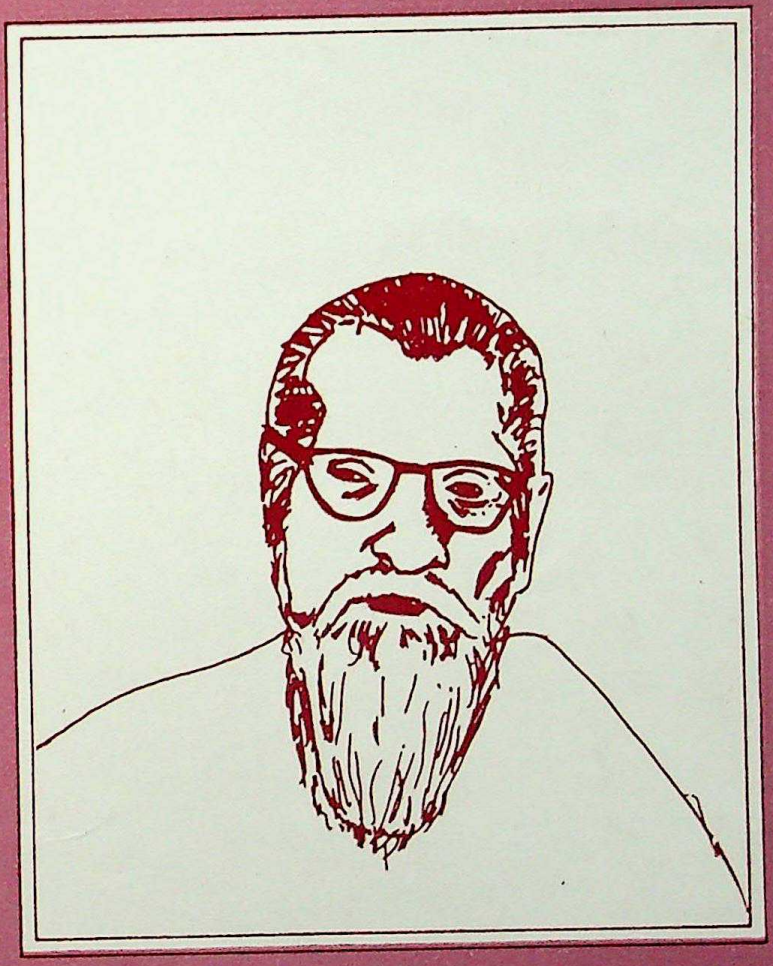
Indian Freedom Fighters Series-37
Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

VINOBA BHAVE

SOCIO-POLITICAL IDEOLOGY



S.R. BAKSHI

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Born in a middle class family, he became an ardern follower of Mahatma Gandhi at a fairly young age. He lived in Gandhi's ashram and propagated the Gandhian ideology throughout his life. He suffered in jail at the call of Gandhi.

The theme deals with his early life, role in the freedom movement, socio-economic ideology, Bhoodan Movement and upliftment of weaker sections of our society. His dedicated work was an example for millions of people.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

VINOBA BHAVE

Socio-Political Ideology

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Indian Freedom Fighters Series-37

Vinoba Bhave

Socio-Political Ideology

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No....5435 16 (IV)
Dated....17.5.03

S.R. BAKSHI

G.M.C.E.J
5435

Anmol Publications
New Delhi (India)

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS
4378/4B, Ansari Road
Daryaganj, New Delhi-110 002

Binoba Bhave : Socio-Economic Ideology

© 1993, Author

ISBN 81-7041-594-5

PRINTED IN INDIA

Published by J.L. Kumar for Anmol Publications, New Delhi
and Printed at Renu Printers Maujpur, Delhi-53

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Preface

Vinoba Bhave's role in the freedom movement of our country is most significant. Born in a middle class family, he became the disciple of Mahatma Gandhi at a fairly young age. Like Bapu, he was non-possessive and spent his whole life either in the Ashram or among the economically weaker sections of our society. Indeed he lived and acted like a true Indian saint and served the people of India in several ways. He understood very well the fact that millions of people live in the villages as landless. He founded the Bhoodan Movement, accepted land as donations from affluent landlords and distributed it among the weaker sections. Thus he spent a disciplined and dedicated life for the economic cause of our people.

The chapters in this work deal with the early career of Vinoba Bhave, his role in the freedom movement as a disciplined follower of Mahatma Gandhi, his participation in the Individual Satyagraha, his contribution in the Bhoodan Movement and distribution of land among the landless and economically weaker sections of our society. The last chapter deals with his legacy for the common man of our sub-continent.

I have consulted the material in Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Sapru House Library and Indian Council of Historical Research Library, New Delhi. I am grateful to the members of the staff of these academic institutions for affording me their support during my researches.

S.R. Bakshi

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Contents

Preface v

1. Early Career 1

2. Social Ideology 23

3. Bhoodan Movement 124

4. The Legacy 203

Chronology 230
Glossary 236
Bibliography 247
Index 249

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1

Early Career

Vinoba Bhave was born in a middle class Brahmin family on 11 September 1895 at Gagode situated in Baroda State. His father, Narhari Shamburao was a textile engineer at Baroda. Of his parents' five children, Vinoba was the eldest. He remained a *Brahmachari*, and devoted his entire life for the upliftment of the weaker sections of our society.

His mother also encouraged Vinoba not to marry and remain a celibate throughout his life. She would often remark : "He who leads a good married life, surely, earns a good name for the family. But he who remains a true *Brahmachari* sanctifies not one, but forty-two generations". It was this unusual advice of the mother which encouraged Vinoba to take a vow of celibacy at the age of ten. His younger brothers, Balkoba and Shivaji, also followed suit. When Vinoba adopted a very rigorous daily life of a Brahmachari and declined the use of bed or shoes, spiced food and hot water for bath, his mother used to express her sympathy but asserted : "If God had not given me the physical body of a woman, I would have tried to live in an even more austere manner!"

Rukminidevi was so engrossed in singing devotional *Bhajans* that she often forgot to add salt to the vegetables; sometimes she would pour it twice. Vinoba also was rather absent-minded during his meals. It was only when Balkoba would partake of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the food that the mother's mistake would be detected. Rukminidevi always asked her sons to shed fear of all kinds and harbour unfailing faith in *Ramanama* or the name of God.

Once Vinoba asked his mother whether real saints and *Rishis* of old still existed on earth. She feelingly remarked : "Vinya, great saints are still in our midst; only we do not recognize them!" She, perhaps, did not realize that her own son would one day be reckoned as one of the greatest *Rishis* of India.

Vinoba used to read out the Marathi daily *Kesari* to his mother in order to keep her in touch with current events. But she was more interested in the *Bhajans* of saints like Tukaram. She was keen to understand the *Gita* as well. Since Vinoba also was not sufficiently conversant with Sanskrit at that time, the mother asked him one day to get a Marathi translation. Vinoba procured a Marathi translation of the *Gita* by Vaman Pandit, but the language was rather difficult to comprehend. Rukmini devi, therefore, asked Vinayak : "Why do you not translate the *Gita* into Marathi verses yourself?" But Vinoba could not fulfil this desire of his mother during her lifetime. It was only during 1930-31 that he could find time to translate the whole of the *Gita* into Marathi and called the translation *Gitai* or *Mother Gita*. In truth, the pious memory of the mother and his attachment to the *Gita* became identified in this manner.

In his childhood. Vinoba's health was none too good, and he often fell ill. His mother would get some medicine from the doctor and pour it in Vinya's mouth saying : "The medicine is *Ganga* water, and the doctor is God or *Narayan Hari*!" Her innate faith in the Divine was unshakable.

Vinoba received his early education at the Baroda High School. He was a brilliant students and gained much popularity among his teachers. He was also well-versed in Sanskrit and Marathi. He used a very simple dress *kurta*, coat and a cap. He never took tea and propagated against its bad effects. As a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

student, he showed much interest in the writings of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Mazzini.

After his high school education Vinoba joined the Intermediate Class of the Baroda College. But he did not like the pattern of education and began to question its utilits and efficacy.

Vinoba wanted to burn his boats once and for all. He had in his mind the story of Sinhagad where victory was scored only after the rope had been cut away by the soldiers of Tanaji in order to prevent his troops from retreating. Vinoba like wise wanted to sever all connection with academic education in order to continue his quest for the Eternal with single-minded devotion. He used to tell his companions that he was thinking of giving up his college studies to realize *Brahma—'Athato Brahmajijnasa.*

"Where will you go?" asked one of his friends. "To Lokmanya Tilak or Annie Besant?"

"I have not the courage to go to Lokmanya or to Besantbai."
"Then will you withdraw to the Himalayas?"

"No. If one cannot realize God in society, there is no chance of finding Him in the Himalayas", asserted Vinoba.

A couple of days before the Intermediate examination was due to be held in Bombay, Vinoba boarded a Bombay-bound train at Baroda with his friend Gopalrao Kale on the 25 March 1916. He detrained at Surat and handed over a letter to Gopalrao for his father with instructions not to post it until the examinations were over. The letter ran thus : "Instead of going to Bombay for taking the examination, I am proceeding somewhere else. I am sure you have trust in me that wherever I may go, I will not indulge in any unethical behaviour".

From Surat, Vinoba took the train to Bhusaval *en route* to Varanasi. His father was naturally upset when he received the letter from his son after some days. He, however, believed that various difficulties would soon compel Vinoba to return home.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

But his mother, who knew her son better, remarked : "Once Vinya has made up his mind, he will stick to his decision, come what may!"

At Varanasi, Vinoba plunged into the study of Sanskrit, especially of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* at the local library in Ahilyabai Wada, and lived on the fifth floor of Tatya Tope's sister's house. He took his simple meals from the charitable kitchens of the temples and led a very austere life. The *Dakshina* of two pice which he received daily at the temple was utilized for purchasing curds and sweet-potatoes for the evening meal. He used to go to the banks of the holy Ganga alone and after bath would meditate there for hours. He also wrote some of the finest poems in Marathi, but offered them to the holy waters after he was satisfied with the quality of diction.

In the *Gita Pravachanen*. Vinoba himself writes about the Ganges : "When I was living in Kashi I used to go and sit on the banks of the Ganga. I would go and sit there in the loneliness of night. What beauty, what brightness in its flow! Those lovely and majestic waters and the countless stars of the sky in them! I would sit there speechless. What calm or mind was mine when my eyes were filled with the sight of the Ganga, which descended from the matted locks of Shiva, from the Himalayas, the river by whose banks Kings, casting off the symbols of power, perform their austerities. In the stillness of the peace, I began to understand why the Hindu wishes that after death his bones at least should be immersed into the Ganga. You may laugh, but that does not alter the fact".

Vinoba used to participate in serious religious discussions on various aspects of the *Shastras*. In one of the meetings on the banks of the Ganga, he found that a lively discussion was taking place on *Dvaita* (dualism) and *Advaita* (non-dualism). During these technical discussions, the *Dvaita* group suffered a defeat and the *Advaitis* scored their points. But Vinoba stood up and declared with firmness : "The *Advaitis* also have been defeated."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"What are you saying?" shouted the victorious pandits.

Vinoba rejoined : "The very fact that *Advaitis* agreed to argue with the other group clearly demonstrates that they are still not free from 'dualism'; hence their defeat."

Once while returning from the river Ganga, he stopped at a hardware merchant's shop to buy a lock for his small room in Durga ghat. Vinoba selected a lock which he knew would cost him only about 3 annas. But the shop-keeper wanted to take advantage of his innocence and quoted 10 annas as its price. Vinoba promptly paid the money, purchased the lock and told the shop-keeper : "I know that this lock costs only 3 annas; but I repose trust in you and, therefore, give you ten annas as asked by you."

Vinoba and his friends had read in the newspapers some months earlier at Baroda about a speech Gandhiji had delivered on the occasion of the foundation-stone ceremony of the Banaras Hindu University at the hands of Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India on 4 February 1916. Annie Besant, the then President of the International Theosophical Society, presided over the function. She had requested Gandhiji to speak on the occasion and expected him to be brief and to the point. Gandhiji, however, bluntly criticized the display of pomp and power of the Government and took the Princes to task for their gaudy dress and costly jewellery in a poor country like India. He also criticized the terrorist methods of Indian revolutionaries for getting rid of the foreign rule. On the previous day, there was an unsuccessful attempt on the life of the Viceroy by throwing a bomb at his car. "If we do not want the British to remain in this country," said Gandhiji, "let us ask them openly and frankly to return to their country." "If for such plain-speaking," he continued, "we are sentenced to death, let us go to the gallows cheerfully." Besant was greatly embarrassed and asked Gandhiji to stop his speech. But the audience wanted him to continue. Besant, therefore, left in protest, along with the Princes and other distinguished guests and the meeting ended in confusion.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

When Vinoba read this report, he was thrilled. He was attracted towards his idea of fearlessness and non-violent resistance even unto death. After his two-month experiences in Varanasi, Vinoba, therefore, decided to meet Gandhiji to satisfy his political as well as spiritual urges. There was an exchange of a few letters between them. Vinoba frankly mentioned some of his doubts and difficulties and raised certain philosophical queries. Gandhiji replied that it was not possible to answer all these questions through correspondence. He, therefore, invited young Vinoba to meet him at the Kochrab Ashram in Ahmedabad for further discussions.

At this point of time when he was hardly twenty years old, he met Mahatma Gandhi at the Kochrab Ashram. On seeing his sincerity and patriotic fervour writ large on his young face, Gandhi offered him the membership of his Ashram. There he worked in the kitchen, in the workshop and in the garden like an ordinary worker. Here Mama Phadke, an inmate from Maharashtra named Vinayak as Vinoba. Gandhi approved his new name. Later on, Gandhi called Vinoba as 'one of the few pearls in the Ashram.' With the passage of time the relationship between the two were greatly strengthened.

After two years, Gandhi shifted his Ashram to Sabarmati. Vinoba joined him there and got himself engaged in spinning, wearing, scavenging, teaching and cooking. He would water several plants by fetching water from the Sabarmati river. Later on Gandhi remarked about him thus : 'Vinoba is a great man'.

On 10 February 1918, Vinoba wrote a long letter in his own hand to Gandhiji giving full details of his studies and activities during his absence from the Ashram. This letter gives a good insight into Vinoba's character and one can scarcely resist the temptation of reproducing it here in full as published in *Young India* :

Most revered Bapuji,

I left the Ashram a year ago to recoup my health. I had intended to stay in Wai for two or three months and then

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

return, but though a whole year has passed away, nothing has been heard from me. Questions, therefore, may have arisen whether I am ever to come back and even whether I am alive or dead. I must admit, I am myself entirely to blame in the matter. I had, however, written a letter or two to Mama Phadke requesting him to write to me immediately if any satyagraha was to be launched. I had told him, I would give up everything to join it, but otherwise I would stay on, out of the Ashram. If anybody suspected that I was a deserter, even there the fault is mine alone, because I am averse to correspondence. I must, however, state here that the Ashram has not only captivated me, but I have also the ingrained conviction that I was really born for the Ashram. Why then, did I lofter away a whole year outside the Ashram precincts?

Early in my life, when I was only ten, I took a solemn vow to observe *Brahmacharya* and dedicate my life to the country. Later on, during my high school days, I was fascinated by the teachings of the *Bhagvad-Gita*. My father, however, asked me to take up French as my second language, but that did not abate my zest to learn the *Gita*. I began to study Sanskrit privately at home that very day, and I was resolved upon studying the *Vedanta* and other books on philosophy whenever possible. When, with your permission, I came to Wai, I saw that there was an excellent opportunity for me to study the *Vedanta*. One Shri Narayan Shastri Marathe, a *Brahmachari* all his life, is teaching the *Vedanta* and other Scriptures here. I was seized with a passion to learn the *Upanishads*, etc., from him. Now let me write what I have done during all this time.

My work with respect to my craving for knowledge which kept me out so long :

Study of (1) the *Upanishads*, (2) the *Gita* (3) *Brahmasutra-Shankarbhashya*, (4) *Manusmriti*, and (5) *Patanjali Yogadarshan*. I went through, besides, (1) *Nyayasutra*, (2) *Vaisheshiksutra* and (3) *Yajnavalkyasmriti*. My desire to study our religious books has now been fully gratified. I can now read whatever I want to in Sanskrit without any extraneous aid.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Then, about the recuperation of health for which I went to Wai. I had made it a rule to walk ten to twelve miles. Then began grinding 6 to 8 seers (12 to 15 lbs) cereals with a hand-mill. At present I do 300 *namaskars* and take a walk every day for physical exercise. This has improved my health.

Regarding my diet : I have never taken other condiments, but, for the first six months I used to take salt. I am now on a saltless and spiceless diet. I have started taking milk. Many experiments proved that I cannot go without milk. But my desire to give it up, if possible, persists. For a month I had nothing but milk, lemon and bananas, but I found that I was getting weak. This is my present diet : Milk 1½ lbs., *jowar chapattis* 2, bananas 4 or 5, lemon 1, when available. When I come to the Ashram I intend to regulate my diet on your advice. I am not tempted by any other food for the sake of its taste only. All the same, I cannot help feeling that my present diet is rather too luxurious. My daily expenses over food, item by item is about : bananas and lemon 4 pice, chapattis 2, milk 5, total 11. I want to know from you what changes I should make. You will please write to me.

Other things done :

Took classes in (1) the *Gita*. Free tuition to six students of the whole gospel with full exposition of the verses. (2) *Jnaneshwari* (a big Marathi exposition on the *Gita* by Jnaneshwar), 6 chapters, 4 students attended. (3) 9 *Upanishads* to two students. (4) Hindi propaganda : I do not know Hindi well myself. But I used to read a Hindi newspaper to some students. (5) English to-two students. (6) Excursions : nearly 400 miles on foot. Saw fortresses of historical fame such as Rajgarh, Sinhagarh, Torangarh, etc. (7) Used to hold during my tramps discoures on the *Gita*, which have come to 50 in all till now. Even now, I propose to foot it to Bombay, and then take a train for Ahmedabad to rejoin the Ashram. A student, 26 years old, has been throughout with me in my journeys and he too is at present footing it out in my company. He is not inclined to study the *Gita* from anyone except myself. The

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

latest date of my entry into the Ashram is Chaitra Sudi 1 (the New Year's day in Maharashtra falling generally in April). (8) I started at Wai an institution called the *Vidyarthi Mandal* (students' association) and founded a library in connection with it. We, fifteen students and myself, formed a club of hand-grinders and our earnings were used in buying books for the library. We offered the same rate (1 pice for 2 lbs) as the local grinding mill, and thus could draw customers. Sons of even high-class families were members of the club. Wai is a centre of orthodoxy and since the hand-grinders were all Brahmin students studying in the high school, we were ridiculed by the public as faddists and fools. All the same, our grinding club continued for two months, and 400 books have been stocked in the library. (9) I tried very much to propagate the principles of the Ashram : I attended its annual celebration. (This 'celebration' means nothing more than a meeting for comparison of the notes of members as to the work accomplished and the work to be done). I put before them the idea of spreading Hindi and I have every reason to believe that the institution will take up the work. Since you have begun an effort for the propagation of Hindi, I may say that this institution in Baroda will be prepared to associate with you in the work.

And finally, I must state how I have behaved as an inmate of the Ashram. These are our vows : Control of the palate : I have already dealt with this vow during my reference in this letter to my dietetic experiments. Non-possession : a wooden dish (*thali*), bowls, one *lota* (a small jug) belonging to the Ashram, dhoti, a blanket and books comprise all my paraphernalia. I have taken a vow not to use a shirt, a cap and a coat. I wrap my upper body also with a dhoti. I use only hand-woven clothes. *Swadeshi* (exclusive use of articles made in one's own country) : I do not use a single-foreign-made article (but only if *swadeshi* is not taken in the expanded sense which you gave it in your speech at Madras). Truth, non-violence, *Brahmacharya* : I am sure that I have strictly observed these vows to the best of my understanding of them.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

What more shall I write? In my dreams and in my waking hours, only one question haunts me : "Will God deign to take service from me?" I followed the rules of the Ashram (except one) and so, though the body may be roaming outside, I am, in reality, always in the Ashram. It is the ideal of my life. The one exception, alluded to above, is about self-cooking, i e., about making, 'chapattis' myself. I tried to observe that rule also, but could not do so in excursions.

If any question of offering satyagraha arises, say, against the hardships of the third-class passengers in railways, I will come immediately; otherwise, I have given you above the latest date of my arrival in the Ashram.

What are the changes that have been made in the Ashram? How many students are there? What is your scheme of national education?; and what changes should I make in my diet? I am longing for advice on all these points. And you must write the reply yourself, in your own hand; that is the earnest and insistent prayer of this 'Vinoba', your son, to whom you are no other than his revered father.

I will leave this town in a few days.

—Vinoba's Pranam.

On reading this detailed letter, Gandhiji was overwhelmed with emotion. "He is a *Bhim*, a Hercules!" exclaimed he. "He is a Goraknath who has beaten his Guru Macchandarnath." And this was the memorable reply written by Gandhiji.

I do not know in what terms to praise you. Your love and your character fascinate me and so also your self-examination. I am not fit to measure your worth. I accept your own estimate and assume the position of a father to you. You seem almost to have met a long-felt wish of mine. In my view a father is, in fact, a father only when he has a son who surpasses him in virtue. A real son, likewise, is one who improves on what the father has done; if the father is truthful, firm of mind and compassionate, the son will be all this in a greater measure. This is what you have made yourself. I don't see that you

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

owe your achievement to any effort of mine. Hence, I accept the role you offer to me as a gift of love. I shall strive to be worthy of it; and, if ever I become another Hiranya-kashyapu, oppose me respectfully as Prahlad, who loved God, disobeyed him.

It is true as you say that, though outside the Ashram, you have scrupulously observed its rules. I never doubted that you would return. Besides, I had your written messages, read out by Mama. May God grant you long life, and use you for the uplift of India.

I don't see any need for changes in your diet just yet. Do not give up, milk for the present. On the contrary, increase the quantity, if necessary.

About the railways, no satyagraha is required. What is wanted is intelligent workers to carry on propaganda. On the issue in Kheda District, satyagraha may possibly have to be offered. I am something of a tramp these days. In a day or two, I shall have to leave for Delhi.

More when you arrive. Everyone is looking forward to seeing you.

Blessings from Bapu.

Exactly after a year, and punctually to the minute, Vinoba returned to the Ashram at the morning prayers, bare-headed and bare-foot, and almost unnoticed. It was Monday, Gandhiji's day of silence. Vinoba, therefore, did not like to disturb Bapu and went straight to the kitchen to take up his usual place among the peelers of vegetables for the meals. Gandhiji was surprised to see Vinoba at breakfast, and welcomed him back to the Ashram with affection. Impressed by his punctuality, Gandhiji remarked :

"It shows your fidelity to truth."

"Rather, it is my loyalty to mathematics", put in Vinoba politely.

"Can mathematics ever betray truth?" smiled Bapu.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

As a matter of fact, even during his so-called holiday, Vinoba had conformed to all the observances of the Ashram in his daily life. In other words, Vinoba conducted a 'mobile Ashram during his one-year leave.

It was Vinoba's genuine desire to reduce himself to a zero in the process of search for Truth and Eternity. During his Ashram life, he rendered Gandhiji's little book *Mangla Prabha* into Marathi and worte a few couplets by way of introduction. In the last couplet, he wrote :

Vinya is like the non-being zero of mathematics;
The *Guru* is one and unique;
His esteem grows by the addition of zeros like mine.

Vinoba, along with his colleagues Raghunath Dhotre and Dwarkanath Harkare, and a few selected students, including Vallabhswami, his brother Bhaskar, Kesho Gandhi, Krishnadas Gandhi and Shivaji, left Sabarmati Ashram on 6 April and reached Wardha on the 8 April 1921. They started their work at Maganwadi, a garden colony of Jamnalalji on the outskirts of the city. Since a good number of people used to come to this place for their morning ablutions and bath at the well within the colony, Vinoba suggested a change. Jamnalalji readily vacated his thatched bungalow along with an eight-acre plot, about two miles away from the town, at a place which is now called Bajajwadi. It was this *ghas-ka bangala* (thatched bungalow) where Vinoba and his colleagues set up the Satyagraha Ashram in July 1921 and ran it for several years. Since it was situated amidst desolate surroundings, it was popularly believed to be haunted by ghosts. Some time later, Gopalrao Kale, Babaji Moghe and Valunjkar joined him. Balkoba also shifted to Wardha to help his elder brother in this onerous task. The bungalow was infested with snakes and scorpions and students were gradually trained to catch them alive and throw away at some distance.

Vinoba Bhave participated in the Flag Satyagraha in 1923 and was arrested and lodged in the Nagpur jail. He was released

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

on 3 September 1923. In 1924 Gandhi sent him to Travancore to direct non-cooperation movement at Vaikom. In fact Harijans had been debarred from entering a Shiva temple in that area. Gandhi also directed this satyagraha. Ultimately the local authorities yielded and the satyagraha was withdrawn after a year and four months.

When Gandhiji started on his Dandi March in 1930 from Sabarmati Ashram, the whole country responded to this novel satyagraha with exceptional enthusiasm. Vinoba and his group of workers were wholly engrossed in their own experiments at the Wardha Ashram; but they could not afford to remain aloof from this national movement. Vinoba initiated in Wardha district a movement for cutting down palmyra trees to prevent the manufacture of toddy. The workers used to march to the forest areas with axes in their hands. They were successful in felling about 2000 trees in five months, and the campaign caught on. But the police did not arrest either Vinoba or his co-workers. However, the Forest Satyagraha in Wardha district led by the Ashram inmates led to a number of arrests, especially at Kelzar.

This period was also utilized by Vinoba in rendering the *Gita* into Marathi verses. He commenced this work on 7 October 1930 and completed the first manuscript on 6 February 1931. During these four months, he would recite verses of his Marathi translation loudly before his pupils in the Ashram and elicit their suggestions for improvement. The translation was named *Gitai* or '*Gita* the Mother'. It combined Vinoba's profound respect for the *Gita* and a deep affection for his own mother. The final touches to the manuscript were, in fact, given by Vinoba during his incarceration in the Dhulia jail in 1932. *Gitai* was widely popularised in the Maharashtra countryside by Vinoba's brother Shivaij for many years. It is now recited regularly not only in the Gandhian institutions in Maharashtra, but in oher parts of the country as well. It is interesting to know that even Gandhiji incorporated recitations of verses from the *Gitai* in his daily prayers at Sevagram. The *Gitai* has been translated into Hindi verse by Siaramsaran Gupta. The Gujarati

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

rendering was made by Kishorelal Mashruwala. But Vinoba's Marathi translation is, decidedly, superior to all the rest.

About the literary merits of the *Gitai*, Mahadev Desai wrote: "Vinoba has produced a Marathi translation of the *Gita* in parallel verse which reproduces the haunting music of the original in an amazing degree and a hundred thousand copies of it have been sold in Maharashtra". Even Gandhiji was attracted by the music of the *Gitai* which was felt by him 'to be very sweet'. Shivaji had recited it before him several times in a melodious voice.

When the Civil Disobedience campaign was withdrawn in 1931 as a result of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, Vinoba was invited to preside over a conference of constructive workers in Khandesh, Maharashtra. He delivered an inspiring address at this conference and appealed to the workers to follow Gandhiji's path of truth and non-violence in securing political liberation for India.

In the meantime, Gandhiji had gone to London as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress for participating in the Round Table Conference. The Conference failed to achieve any objective and Gandhiji returned empty-handed early in 1932. Jawaharlal Nehru and several other Congress leaders had already been rounded up. Gandhiji was also arrested soon after. During this period, Vinoba's addressed a huge gathering at Dhulia in Maharashtra. He asked the people to be ready to make the supreme sacrifice for the achievement of *Swaraj*: "Instead of taking lives, we should be prepared to sacrifice our lives for the nation. We are determined to be free, and no power on earth can prevent us from doing so. The flag that has been unfurled today, must continue to fly over Independent India".

At another meeting in Dhulia, Vinoba appealed to businessmen to participate in the freedom struggle by at least taking to *Swadeshi* and boycotting foreign cloth. This was the least that was expected of the business community in the country. "They

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

must not remain mere onlookers during the struggle of life and death for liberating the Motherland."

From Dhulia, Vinoba proceed to Jalgaon. The Government had imposed restrictions on his meetings. As soon as he began speaking, the police arrested Vinoba and sent him for six months to the Dhulia jail where a large number of satyagrahis had already been placed behind bars. They included Jamnalal Bajaj, Gulzarilal Nanda, Khandubhai Desai, Pyarelal, Balubhai Mehta, Gopalrao Kale, Sane Guruji, Rameshwar Podar, Dwarkanath Harkare and Manilal Kothari. Vinoba was given 'B' class by the jail authorities, while most of the other prisoners were categorized as 'C' class. Vinoba refused to accept the 'B' class facilities and preferred to join his colleagues in the 'C' class.

The main work assigned to the prisoners in this jails was grinding the corn. The jailor treated the prisoners very harshly and did not spare even the weak or sick. Vinoba, therefore, told the jailor : "We are prepared to collectively grind corn in as much quantity as you prescribe. But please do not insist on every prisoner to do this work, irrespective of his health." The jailor agreed to follow this procedure. Several satyagrahis volunteered to do the grinding in the required quantity. One day, however, a prisoner whispered : "Vinoba asks others to do grinding, but does not it himself." Vinoba was touched to the quick and realised the inherent anomaly. He therefore, immediately decided to grind 21 lbs. of wheat every day. The follow-prisoners dissuaded him from straining his health to this extent, but Vinoba was adamant. His weight dropped down to 93 lbs., and yet he continued his labours. There were blisters in his fingers and pain in his body. But even these did not deter Vinoba from carrying out his resolve. It was only at the intervention of Jamnalalji that he ultimately discontinued grinding in the Dhulia jail.

On another occassion, there was a quarrel between the satyagrahis and the jail authorities. Some of the prisoners went on hunger strike and Vinoba also joined them. On an assurance

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

from the jailor, most of the prisoners gave up their fast. But Vinoba refused to do so. He said : "I generally do not observe fast, not even on *Ekadashi* or religious festivals like *Shivaratri*. Now that I have gone on fast, I should like to give it up only when all the issues have been resolved satisfactorily." As a result, the jail authorities had to accept all the demands of the prisoners in order to enable Vinoba break his fast.

However, the most important event in Dhulia jail was Vinoba's discourses on the *Gita* every Sunday. The fellow-prisoners had requested Vinoba for these talks, and they commenced on 21 February 1932 and continued till 19 June. During these four monhts, Vinoba spoke extensively on every Chapter of the *Gita*. Fortunately, Sane Guruji kept fairly detailed notes of these discourses and later prepared a manuscript for publication entitled *Gita Pravachanen*. This book, originally published in Marathi has now been translated into all the Indian languages, including Sanskrit, Urdu and Konkani. The Sarva Seva Sangh has brought it out in English and Nepali as well. Millions of copies have already been sold and the demand continues to grow from year to year. Vinoba now regards this publication as his best contribution, and readily autographs all the copies which are purchased by the audience after his prayer meetings. Over his signatures he writes : *Nitya Pathaniya*' (worthy to be studied daily).

In his very first discourse Vinoba observed : "The bond between the *Gita* and me transcends reason. My heart and mind have both received more nourishment from the *Gita* than my body has from my mother's milk. Where the heart is touched, there is no room for argument. Leaving logic behind, I beat the twin rings of faith and practice and, to the best of my ability, fly up into the heavens of the *Gita*. I live and move in the atmosphere of the *Gita*. The *Gita* is my life's breath. To vary the image, I swim in the sea of the *Gita* when I speak of it; but when I am alone, I dive to the depths of this ocean of nectar and there rest in peace".

The style of his discourses is simple, and captivating. His

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

serious observations are interspersed with a number of interesting anecdotes and references to the *Ramayana Mahabharata* and the *Upanishads*. The reader never feels dull, and moves on with the speaker from chapter to chapter with full understanding and appreciation. I have personally tried to read all the available commentaries on the *Gita*, including *Gita Rahasya* of Lokmanya Tilak and *Anasakti Yoga* of Gandhiji, and I can state without any hesitation that Vinoba's *Gita Pravachanen* is by far the best.

According to Vinoba, the basic purpose of the *Gita* is 'to remove the illusion that stands between us and our *Swadharma* or duty.' Arjuna was perplexed about his *Dharma* and a delusion had arisen in his mind. After hearing Lord Krishna's words of wisdom, Arjuna's illusion melted away and he recovered his mental equanimity.

In the second discourse Vinoba explains various terms employed in the *Gita*. He, however, wants the thinkers to discover various meanings for themselves according to their own experience and understanding. Incidentally, he mentions a beautiful story from the *Upanishads* : "Once the *devas* (bright gods), the *danavas* (dark gods) and the men, all went to *Prajapati* (the Creator) for advice. *Prajapaii* gave all the three of them the same word of advice, the syllable '*da*'. The bright gods said : 'We *devas* are self-indulgent ; the taste for sensual pleasures has taken hold of us. So Brahma, by the sound '*da*', has told us to acquire '*danana*' (self-control)'. The dark gods said : 'We *damavas* are very prone to anger, and hard-hearted; the Creator has advised us, by the sound '*da*', to cultivate '*daya*, (compassion)'. The men said : 'We men are given to greed, and have become mad after piling up wealth; by saving '*da*', *Prajapati* has advised us to practise '*dana*' giving of alms).' The Creator approved of all the three interpetations, because each had arrived at the meaning in terms of his own experience. While understanding the technical terms of the *Gita*, we should bear in mind this story from the *Upanishads*."

At a later stage, Vinoba compares *Swadharma* to one's

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mother : "It was not left to me to choose my mother in this birth. It had aleady been determined for me. No matter what sort of person she is, there is no pushing her away. That is precisely the case with *Swadharma*; it is inescapable... To disown one's *Swadharma* is to disown oneself, to commit suicide".

He continues : "When attachment to the body goes, one realizes that the body is an instrument for service; and then the body also finds its real support and receives the honour due to it. But today we regard pampering the body as the sole purpose of our lives. We have forgotten that life is to be lived for the fulfilment of *swadharma*".

Explaining the unique idea of the *Gita* relating to the renunciation of the fruit of our actions, Vinoba states : "Don't hanker after the fruit', says the *Gita*. But it also insists that you should act with full energy and skill. The action of the person who acts without desire should be much better than that of the person who acts with desire. The latter is attracted to the fruit, and a part, much or little, of his time and attention will of course be spent on thoughts and dreams of the fruit. But all the time and all the strength of the man who has no desire for the fruit is devoted to the action. The river takes no rest, the wind knows no fatigue, and the sum can only shine and shine forever."

In his inimitable style, Vinoba asserts that "renunciation of fruit is the most effective and noble principle; it is real *Yoga*, the art of living". In this connection Vinoba refers to the life of Pundalik as an ideal form of renunciation : "Pundalik looked after his parents and served them. Being pleased with such service the Lord Pandurang came running to greet him. But Pundalik would not be beguiled by Pandurang, and refused to give up his duty of service. Serving his father and mother was for him the worship of God, true *bhakti*. Pundalik was not caught up in any attachment to a form. He said to God : 'Lord, you have come yourself to bless me with this vision. This I understand. But I believe in the doctrine of 'and also'. I can-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

not accept that you alone are God. My parents too are God. Since I am engaged in their service, I am unable to give you my attention. Please forgive me' So he pushed towards the Lord a brick for him to stand on, and became absorbed again in his service to the parents".

Vinoba also deals with the qualities of the steadfast mind, *sthitaprajna*, in a very beautiful manner : "How can the mind be steadfast without self-controls? So the *sthitaprajna* is said to be the embodiment of self-control. The mind being fixed in the self (*atman*) and controlling the *indriyas* (the organs of perception and action)—this is self-control. Using his *indriyas* as oxen, he ploughs well and cultivates the field of the disinterested performance of *swadharma*. Every breath of his is used in this higher pursuit."

In the course of his discourse on the Third Chapter, Vinoba deals with infinite gains from the renunciation of the fruits of our action. He relates the story of Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity : "It was her *svayamvara* (the day when she was to choose her husband). All the gods and titans had come with hopes raised high; Lakshmi had not proclaimed her vow before. She came into the assembly and said, 'I shall garland only the man who has no desire for me'. But then, they were all covetous of her. So Lakshmi began to search for the desireless one whom she could choose. Now, there appeared before her the form of Lord Vishnu, lying, peacefully on the serpent, *Shesha*. She put the wedding garland round His neck and to this day she sits there, stroking His feet. *Ramaa* (the goddess of wealth) becomes the slave of him who does not hanker after her. That is the wonder of it!"

During the same talk, Vinoba recalls the story of Sudama going to Lord Krishna with a gift of flattened rice : "The handful of rice may not be worth even a pie, but to Sudama it seemed invaluable, for his devotion went with it. It was charmed rice. Every gram of it was charged with his love. However cheap a thing may be, the *mantra*, the charm (words charged with power) increases its value, its power. What after

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

all is the weight of a currency note? If we burn it, we might, perhaps, be able to warm a drop of water. But the stamp on it gives its value. This is the whole beauty of *karma-yoga* also. Action is like the currency note. Its value is that of the *bhavana* (the feeling behind it), the stamp it bears, not that of the *karma* or outward action, the piece of paper."

Illustrating the same idea. Vinoba makes a mention about his own mother : "My mother scribbled three or four lines on a piece of paper and sent it off to me; another gentleman sent me a long discursive fifty-page letter. Now, which is more weighty? The feeling in my mother's few lines is beyond measure; it is sacred. The other stuff cannot stand comparison with it. Action must be moistened with love, filled with feeling (*bhavana*)."

He also makes a feeling reference to Rukmini weighing Lord Krishna with a *tulsi* leaf : "With a single leaf of *tulsi*, Rukmini weighed Giridhar, the lord who lifted up a mountain.' Satyabhama's ponderous jewellery was of no avail. But when mother Rukmini laid a *tulsi* leaf, filled with devotion, on the scale, the thing was done. The *tulsi* leaf was charged with magic. It was no longer a common leaf. This is true of the action of the *karma-yogi* too."

Vinoba continues his talk on the Third Chapter by giving an illustration of a bath in the Ganga : "Suppose" two men go for a bath in the Ganga. One of them says, "What is this Ganga that people talk so much about? Take two parts of hydrogen and one of oxygen; combine the two gases—it becomes Ganga. What else is there in the Ganga? The other says, "The Ganga flows from the lovely lotus-feet of Lord Vishnu. She has dwelt in the matted hair of Siva. Thousands of seers, both ascetic and kingly, have done penance near her. Countless holy acts have been performed by her side. Such is the sacred Ganga, my mother. Filled with this *bhavana* (feeling), he bathes in the river. The other man, regarding it as combination of hydrogen and oxygen also bathes. Both derive the benefit of physical

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

cleansing. But the devotee (*bhakta*) gets the benefit of mental purilication as well."

It is further pointed out that the *karma-yogi* by surrendering the desire for the fruit receives endless rewards. His life proceeds evenly; he is radiant in body and mind. The society in which he moves is happy. He attains inward purity and also knowledge. Vinoba explains : "We have developed some absurd ideas about the spirit. People imagine that once a man has become spiritual, there is no more need for him to move hand or foot, or do any work. They say, 'What sort of religious man is this, who ploughs the fields and weaves khadi?' But nobody asks how a spiritual man can eat food. The God of the *karma-yogi* brushes down horses. At the Pandavas *Rajasuya* sacrifice, He clears the leafplates after the feast. He goes out into the forest to graze cows.....So the saints have pictured a *karma-yogi* God who rubs horses down, takes cows out to graze, drives a chariot, cleans dishes and mops up floors. And they themselves have done the work of a tailor, a potter, a weaver, a gardener, a trader, a barber or a cobbler. Doing these things, they have found themselves and become free."

In the Fourth Chapter, Vinoba explains in a very scientific manner the three words, *karma*, *vikarma*, and *akarma*. *Karma* is the concrete, outward action performed as *swadharma*. The participation of the *chitta*, the mind and heart, in this external action is *vikarma*. The mere act, the *karma*, is like powder, which has to be activated by the fire of feeling, *vikarma*. But when *vikarma* is combined with *karma*, a power is released which results in *akarma* (inaction in action).

Vinoba goes on to explain that the experience of *akarma* can be learnt from the saints who, though engaged in a thousand actions, do not allow a ripple to arise in the still waters of their mind. "One can never understand this miracle until one goes to a saint and sees it."

In the Fifth Chapter, Lord Krishna explains the two aspects of *akarma—yoga* and *sannyasa*. Vinoba deals with the subject in a very lucid manner. He mentions two forms of *sannyasa*:

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"One aspect of this state of *akarma* is that, though the man acts, he does not act. The other aspect is that, though he does not act at all, he moves the whole world to action. There is in him an immeasurable power to impel to action. This is the paradox of *akarma* : it is filled with a power that is capable of infinite action. It is like steam which, when compressed, does enormous work."

It may be mentioned here that Vinoba has been trying to work on the invincible plane of *akarma* for several years past. He often tells us that he has now entered the *sukshma* or the subtle form of action. In this contex, the following observations of Vinoba will make an interesting reading : "And both are rare. In one aspect, the action is explicit, and the state of *akarma* implicit. In the other though the state of *akarma* is clearly manifest, yet, because of it, endless activity is continuously going on. In this state, *akarma* is filled to overflowing with action, and thus mighty actions are achieved. There is a world of difference between the man in this state and the idler. The lazy man gets easily tired and depressed. But the *sannyasi*, who does no work, conserves his power. He does not work at all. That is, he does not work with his limbs, or with his mind. But even while he does nothing, he does infinite work."

Towards the end of his discourse on the Fifth Chapter of the *Gita*, Vinoba explains that *sannyasa* and *yoga* are such high concepts that in their absolute form the cannot be embodied in any human being. "But though they cannot be contained by the body, they can be comprehended by the mind." He illustrates this by stating that Yajnavalkya was a *sannyasi* while Janaka was a *karma-yogi*. Again, Shukadeva, the *sannyasi*, was the disciple of the *karma-yogi* Janaka. In this manner, explains Vinoba, *yoga* and *sannyasa* succeed each other like flowers in a garland : "Though their names are different, and they appear to be two, they are in reality on... If perfect *karma yoga* is *sannyasa*, perfect *sannyasa* is *karma-yoga*; there is no difference."

In the course of his discourse on the Sixth Chapter, Vinoba reiterates his conviction that the *Gita* is not intended for ascetics

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

alone : "It is a scripture intended for ordinary men, living their daily lives in the world." He whole-heartedly endorses Tilak's view mentioned in his *Gita Rahasya* that the *Bhagwad Gita* is for the whole world and not for the chosen few. "It is prepared to go to the lowest, the weakest, the least cultured of men. And it goes to him not to keep him where he is, but to grasp him by the hand and life him up.

Dealing with *dhyana-yoga*, one-pointedness of mind. Vinoba narrates an interesting story to illustrate his point : "There was a fakir. An arrow had entered his body. The pain was unbearable. But any attempt to pull the arrow out would make it worse. They did not know of chloroform or other anaesthetics in those days. It was a difficult situation. Some people who know him came forward and said : 'Don't try to pull out the arrow now. It will be easy to do so when he is at prayer.' The time came for *namaz*. The fakir settled down to pray. In a moment his mind became one-pointed, and he did not know that the arrow was pulled out. Look at the power of concentration!"

Vinoba further explains that for achieving such concentration of mind, purity of life is essential. It is also necessary to set bounds to one's life. "All our actions must be measured and weighed. Precision, the secret of mathematics, should be found in all our actions. As we measure out each dose of medicine before taking it, our sleep and food too should be in measure. This should be so everywhere in our life. All our senses should be under strict watch, to see that we do not sleep too much, or eat too much, or even look at too many things."

"This Universe is auspicious, full of goodness, because God looks after it. As Browning says—

'God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!'

"Nothing is wrong in this world. If there is anything wrong, it is in my vision. As is my vision, so is the world. If I wear red glasses, the world too would appear red and aflame."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

It is also emphasized that the first few year's of a child's life are very impressionable and a teacher must deal with the child at this early age in a very delicate and cautious manner. Says Vinoba : "Any little incident makes a powerful impression on the child's mind. Educationists regard the first three or four years of a child's education as the really effective part of education. No matter how many Universities, or High Schools or Cultural Associations you establish, one never gets again what one had in the first few years. I have had something to do with education. Day by day, my conviction becomes stronger that the effect of this formal education is just nothing. The impressions formed in the earliest years are set as in hard cement. Later education is like superficial plastering or the colour-wash outside. By using soap and water, you can wash off dirt from the body, but how to wash off the colour of one's skin? Thus the first impressions are hard to remove."

Vinoba's discourse on the Seventh Chap er deals with *bhakti*; "Bhakti is essential to all kinds of effort. It is the universal method. If a trained nurse, attending on a patient, has not the mental attitude of service, how could it be true service? If a bullock is strong, but is not inclined to draw the cart, he will hang his head and lie down, or even overturn it in a ditch. In work without heart, there is neither strength nor satisfaction."

To illustrate his point, Vinoba mentions several examples : "When Dharmaraj reached at last the gates of heaven, there was only a dog with him. Bhima, Arjuna and the others had fallen by the, wayside. He was told. 'You ean come in, but the dog is not allowed to enter.' Dharmaraj answered, if my dog cannot enter, neither will I.' One who performs devoted service, even if it is only a dog, is superior to those who are always thinking of themselves."

Another illustration given by Vinoba would appear to be of special interest to the reader : "I was once travelling in a train. It was passing over a bridge across the Jamuna. A passenger sitting next to me flung with great enthusiasm a coin into the river. There was a rationalist in the compartment who observed:

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"The country is poverty-stricken, and on top of that, there are people who throw coins out of carriage, windows.' You have not understood why he does it,' I said. 'The *bhavana*, the mental attitude with which he threw the coin, is worth at least two or three such coins, is it not? If the money had been given for some good cause, it would no doubt have been better. We shall think about it later. But then, he was moved to do this because of the feeling that this is not a mere river, but the Lord's compassion flowing before us'."

Acharya Vinoba's *Pravachan* on the Eighth Chapter highlights the fact that "the thought that is uppermost at the moment of death prevails in the succeeding birth." The end of this life is the beginning of the next. We should, therefore, walk through life having in mind the hour of death. It is also necessary to conquer the fear of death and make it easy to cross over. Here again, Vinoba tells a story : "There is a story about Eknath. A man asked him, 'Maharaj, your life is so simple and sinless. Why is our life utterly different? You are angry with none, you quarrel with none, you hate none. How calm, how loving, how pure you are!' Eknath replied, 'Never mind me. I have found out something about you. In seven days from now, you will die.' Who could disbelieve Eknath's words? Death in seven days? Oh, God, what a calamity! He ran in haste to his house. Nothing seemed clear to him. He was talking of disposing of his affairs and preparing for the end. Then he fell ill, and lay, flat on his bed. Six days passed. On the seventh day, Eknath came to visit him He greeted the saint. Eknath enquired, 'How are you?' He said, 'All is over. Now I am going'. Eknath asked further, 'In these six days, how many sins did you commit? And how many sinful thoughts came into your mind?' And the man who had been awaiting death answered, Lord, where was the time to think of evil thoughts? Death stood ever before my eyes.' Eknath said, 'Now you know the reason, don't you, why our lives are absolutely sinless?'"

Vinoba also recollects a number of incidents from his own

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

life. Here is one such reminiscence : "Many years ago, I went on a visit to my old grandmother. She complained : 'Vinya, I remember nothing these days. I go to fetch the ghee-pot, and then come back forgetting all about it.' But she talked to me about some trouble regarding a jewel which occurred fifty years earlier. She could not remember what happened five minutes, before, but something fifty years old was still fresh in her memory. How to account for this? She must have been talking about the jewel affair again and again to a great many people—and therefore, it had become a part of her life. I said to myself, 'Oh God, don't let my grandmother think of the jewel at the time of death!' "

Vinoba recalls a somewhat similar observation by Gandhiji : "Once Bapu said, 'I keep shouting of the charkha day and night. I consider the charkha a holy thing. And yet, at the last moment, even this concern, this *vasana*, should disappear. He who inspired me with this love of the charkha, can very well look after it Himself. The charkha has now been taken up by many good people. I must now give up worrying about the charkha and get ready to join the Lord'."

In the course of his observations on the Ninth Chapter, Vinoba refers to several stories from the *Puranas* to carry conviction to us that the doors of *moksha* or salvation are open to all. For example, Janaka approached Sulabha, an ordinary women, to learn wisdom from her. The Brahmin Jajan went to a merchant Tuladhar in search of wisdom. An arrogant ascetic was asked by his Guru to approach the hunter and learn self-knowledge from him. Tukaram describes with appreciation the story of Sajan, the butcher, who also attained liberation by performing his actions in the form of a *Yajna*.

Vinoba ends by saying that *karma-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* ultimately merge into one. "The *karma-yogi* performs his actions with efficiency but dedicates the fruit to God with complete devotion. It is this emotion of *bhakti* which is of crucial importance." Vinoba becomes reminiscent and relates one of his talks with a professor : " '*Patram pushpam phalam toyam*', a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

leaf, a flower, a fruit, a little water, whatever it is, *bhakti* makes the offering complete. The question is not how much you give, but with what *bhavana*. Once I was talking to a professor about a problem in teaching. We happened to differ. Finally he said, 'Sir, I've been at this job for eighteen years'. When, instead of convincing me, he cited his long experience, I said in fun, 'Sir, if for eighteen years a bullock is yoked to an oil nill, does it become an engineer?' It is one thing to go round-and round blindly like a bullock and quite another to under stand the science of engineering. A man may carry for years the burden of teaching and yet not understand the art of teaching."

In the Tenth Chapter, Vinoba mentions several examples to prove that God can be realized in a variety of physical forms, including that of the mother, as also some animals like the horse and the lion : "The familiar form in which God first appears to us is our own mother. The Veda says, '*matru devo-bhava*!—Let your mother be your God. Who but the mother does the new-born child see? The Lord Himself stands there as the embodiment of tenderness. It is this worship of th mother that we would carry to love of country when we sing, '*vande mataram*' and then to love of the universal Mother Earth. And yet in the beginning the first image of the Lord Supreme that comes before the child is the mother."

And then about the horse : "A friend of mine was learning to ride. The horse used to throw him off. He said, "The horse will not let me keep my seat.' I said to him, 'Do you only attempt to ride the horse, or do you also feed him and look after him? When someone else serves him, how can you ride him? Feed him yourself and give him water, rub him down and then try to ride him.' He did so and said to me after a few days. The horse doesn't throw me off now.' The horse is a form of the Lord. And would He throw off a servant? The horse yielded to his devotion."

And lastly the lion : "When I was in Baroda I would get up in the morning listening to its majestic roar. The majestic

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

beauty of his voice thrilled my heart. The magnificent sound proceeding from his heart was like the sound one hears in the inmost shrine of a temple. The noble courage, the fearless beauty of his expression! The regal gait and mien! His flowing mane is the *chamara*, the royal insignia, provided by nature for the king of the forest. In a garden in Baroda there was a lion. He was not free, he went round and round in a cage. But there was not a trace of cruelty in his eyes. There was compassion in his expression and his look It looked as though he had no thought for the world and was absorbed in his own meditation. In fact, the lion is a holy manifestation of the Lord. I read, when I was a child, the story of 'Androcles and the Lion'. What a wonderful story! The famished lion remembering Androcles' kindness, becomes his friend and licks his feet. What does it mean? Androcles had been in the lion the Lord Himself. There is always a lion near the Lord Shiva. The lion is a creature of divine glory."

In the Eleventh Chapter, Lord Krishna reveals to Arjuna *vishvarupa-darshana*, or the vision of the cosmic form. In the ultimate analysis, however, Arjuna feels completely dazed and pleads. "Lord, let me see your familiar human form again" Vinoba utilizes this occasion to explain his ideas about image-worship. He observes: "Many people have opposed image-worship. Foreigners, and even thinkers of our own country, have found fault with it. But the more I think of it the more I realize its beauty. What is the meaning of it? Image-worship is the *vidya*, the art of experiencing the whole universe in a little object. Is it wrong to learn the *vidya* which helps us to see the whole world in a little village? This is not mere imagination, it is a matter of direct experience."

In this connection, Vinoba recollects his personal experience many years ago when he visited the Lakshminarayan temple in Wardha: "When Shri Jamnalal Bajaj threw open to the Harijans the Lakshminarayan temple in Wardha, I too went there for *darshan*. For some fifteen or twenty minutes I stood gazing at the image. It was as if I was in *samadhi*. As I looked at the face, the chest, the hands and then the feet, my eyes

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

were rooted in the feet. All that remained with me was the feeling—Sweet indeed is the worship of Your Feet.

In the Twelfth Chapter, Lord Krishna describes the two types of *bhakti*—*saguna* and *nirguna*. Vinoba opines that these two kinds are not contradictory, but complementary : "*Saguna* is easy and free from danger; but it needs *nirguna* to complete it. As *saguna* grows, the flower of *nirguna*, of devotion to principle, should blossom. *Nirguna* and *saguna* complement each other, they are not incompatible... Both these kinds of *bhakti* are nobly illustrated throughout the *Ramayana*, especially in the *Ayodhya Kanda*. Bharata illustrates the *nirguna* form of bhakti, and Lakshmana, the *saguna* form."

Vinoba adds an episode from his own life. "I had gone to Vaikom to observe the satyagraha there. I remembered the geographical fact that Shankaracharya's birth-place was on the border of Malabar. I had a feeling that Shankara's village, Kalady, was somewhere near. I asked the Malayali gentleman who accompanied me. He said, 'It is some 10 or 12 miles from here. Do you want to go there? I said I did not. I was going to see the satyagraha in progress, and it did not seem proper to go elsewhere. So on that occasion I did not go to that village. Even now it seems to me that I was right in not going there then. But that night, when I went to bed; that village of Kalady and the image of Shankaracharya stood before my eyes again and again. I could not sleep. That experience is still with me, as fresh today as it was then. Again and again that night I thought of Shankaracharya—of the power of his *jnana*, his divine certitude in *advaira*, the extraordinary, glowing *vairagya*, non-attachment, which convinced him that *samsara*, this phenomenal life, was all false, of the majesty of his language and the boundless help I have received from him. All night long these images stood before me. Then I realized how *nirguna* is filled to the brim with *saguna*."

Vinoba ends by stating : "The truth of the matter is that *saguna* and *nirguna* complete each other. *Saguna* is easy and *nirguna* difficult. But from another point of views, *saguna* is

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

difficult and *nirguna* easy. Both these means take us to the same end."

In the course of the Thirteenth Chapter, Vinoba underscores the need for understanding the distinction between body and spirit. Such an understanding helps a person in separating action from the desire for the fruit. "The figure which we see with our eyes, we call an image, a form, a body. But even after seeing with our eyes the outer form, we still have to enter into the object and see it from within. We have to remove the armour, the outer skin, of the fruit and taste the pulp within. Even the coconut one has to break to see what there is within. Despite its rough sharp exterior the jack-fruit is full of sweet, juicy pulp."

In the course of his talks, Vinoba highlighted the need of imparting education to children in such a manner that they were able to distinguish the real self from their body. Instead of laying stress only on their physical well-being, the teacher should care even more for their spiritual development. Corporal punishment is highly injurious not merely physically but morally and spiritually as well, because the child begins to attach undue importance to his body alone. Said Vinoba : "The truth is that the body is not an end, but a means. Once we are confirmed in this attitude, all this fussing over the body will cease. Life will present a different appearance to us." The desirability of distinguishing between the body and the self is essential fr m the standpoint of satyagraha also. "The day a man discovers this secret, his real education, his real growth begins. It is only then that satyagraha will succeed."

In this connection, Vinoba makes a special mention of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ : "At such times I can to mind the sacrifice of Jesus. They were hammering nails into his body. It is said that then the words came out of His mouth, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? But soon Jesus collected Himself and said. "They will be done! Lord forgive them for they know not what they do.! There is a great secret in this. This shows clearly how far the Self should be separated

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

from the body. What the goal should be, and how near to it we can get, we can learn from the life of Jesus. We reach the point where we see the body being peeled off like the skin of a fruit. Whenever I think of how the spirit should be distinguished from the body, the life of Jesus and this final scene appear before my eyes."

The Fourteenth Chapter of the *Gita* describes the directions in which we should exercise self-control. "The oars propel the boat, but the rudder directs it. The oars and the rudder are both needed. In the same way, for separating the self from the pains and pleasures of the body, both discrimination and self-control are needed."

Vinoba explains that our nature is made up of three *gunas*—qualities—*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* : "Everywhere there is a mixtures of these three. A little more here and a little less there, that's all the difference. If we separate the Self from these three, we can separate it from the body. To examine and conquer these three *gunas*, is itself the way of separating the Self from the body. Through self-control one should conquer these one by one, until one approaches in the end the most important thing, that which is beyond the *gunas*."

For achieving control over *tamas*, Vinoba lays great stress on physical labour. It is only through such 'bread-labour' that we can conquer sloth and laziness. Vinoba delineates : "Thus there are two classes of men in society—those who work day and night and kill themselves, and those who do not lift a little finger. A friend of mine once said to me, 'Some are heads and some are trunks. On the one hand, we have headless bodies, and on the other, bodiless heads. The trunks merely labour, while the heads merely think. Society has come to consist of *Rahus* and *Ketus*, who never meet.' But if in reality they were separate heads and trunks it would not matter. For then some mutual arrangement could be made, as in the story of the blind man and the lame man. The lame could lead the blind and the blind carry the lame. But the heads and the trunks do not really from different groups. Every-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

body has both a head and a trunk. This combination of head and trunk is found everywhere. What then shall we do? Every one must shake off laziness. And to shake off laziness one must perform bodily labour; this is the only way to conquer laziness."

Vinoba has an original idea about conquering sleep along with laziness : "Sleep must be deep and peaceful and undisturbed. The value of sleep does not consist in its duration. Sleep does not depend on the length of the bed or the period during which the person lay on it. The deeper the well, the sweeter and purer is its water. So too, though one may sleep for a short while, if it is deep, it does good. It is better to study with concentration for half an hour than to look at a book for three hours with a wandering mind. Sleep too is like that. It cannot be said that long sleep is always beneficial. Only deep dreamless sleep is true sleep."

The cure for *rajas*, says Vinoba, is to live within the limits of *swadharma*. "The chief mark of *rajas* is the desire to do all sort of things, an overweening ambition to do superhuman deeds. Through *rajas* we conceive a limitless desire for action, a consuming greed". He continues : "All the acts of the man of *rajas* are restless and uncertain. He is like the child who plants a seed, and a little later, digs it up again to see if it has sprouted. He expects results then and there. He has neither confidence nor equanimity. He does not know how to plant his feet firmly. He does some work here; he gets some fame there; then he goes off to a third place which is neither here nor there. Today a reception in Madras, tomorrow in Calcutta and the day after in Bombay or Nagpur. His ambition is to get civic addresses from every municipality in the land. He sees glory everywhere. But staying in a place and doing some steady work, that is not his way."

Sattva-guna can be conquered by first conquering egoism and then developing a sense of attachment. "Take, for example, kindness to all creatures. Though this is a useful quality, we should be able to keep away even from this attachment; we should have kindness, but not attachment to kindness."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

At the end of the talk on the Fourteenth Chapter Vinoba declares. "The task is not complete till self-realization is attained. In the end, therefore, the grace of the Lord is essential. And through real devotion of the heart, we should qualify for the grace of the Lord. I know no other means for this".

In the Fifteenth Chapter, the world is compared to a might tree which has huge branches nourished by the three *gunas*. This tree is to be cut down with the axe of desirelessness and detachment. We have not only to conquer *rajas* and *tamas*, but even conquer the attachment to *sattva* and remain completely free. The *Gtta* places before us the ideal of the lotus flower. "In India the most noble things of life are compared to the lotus. The lotus is the symbol of our culture. The lotus, though pure and holy, is unattached. Purity and non-attachment are its twofold power. We compare every part of the Lord's body with the lotus. We speak of His lotus-eyes, lotus-feet, lotus hand, lotus-face, lotus-navel, lotus-heart and lotus-head and by this comparison we impress on our hearts the truth that everywhere beauty, holiness and non-attachment exist."

In his discourse, Vinoba makes a special reference to Ashram life : "When in an Ashram some one has to do a lot of work, it never occurs to him to complain; 'Why should I alone do so much work?' There is a beauty in this. If the worshipper gets four hourse instead of the usual two for his worship, would he complain, 'Good Lord, I had to worship for four hours today !'?' On the contrary, he would rejoice all the more. One has this experience in an Ashram. We should have this experience everywhere in life. Life should be consecrated to service".

And he adds : "All our actions from morning till night should become worship of the Lord. Bathing, eating, or sweeping, we should think of the Lord. While, sweeping, we should have the attitude that we are cleaning the courtyard of the Lord, the master of our life. All our actions should thus become acts of worship !"

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

At the end, Vinoba makes a significant point that *karma*, *bhakti* and *jnana* together make a single beautiful form". "And from it springs naturally, wonderful service full of love and full of knowledge. One loves one's mother; but this love should express itself in action. Love is constantly striving, and expressing itself in the form of service. The outer form of love is service. Where there is love, knowledge comes and joins it !"

It is, indeed, remarkable how Vinoba has been able to translate this ideal into actual life. His whole personality is a matchless fusion of the three basic qualities of knowledge, devotion and action. It is undeniably, a very rare combination. But Vinoba epitomizes such a combination in an extraordinary manner. To me, this is the quintessence of his illustrious and versatile personality.

The Sixteenth Chapter entitled *Purushottama-yoga*, speaks of the conflict between the Divine and demonic tendencies within, a human being : "Kurukshetra is both outside us and within us. When we observe it carefully, it is the battle raging within that we see assuming shape in the world without. He who seems to be my enemy is only the passion in my heart taking on a shape and standing out there. Just as my image, handsome or ugly, appears in the mirror, it is the bad and good thoughts of our mind that appear without as our enemies and friends. As we see in dreams what we have seen while awake, so we see in the world without what is in our hearts. Between the battle within and the battle without, there is little difference. To speak the truth, the real battle is only within ourselves".

Among the good qualities, *abhaya* or fearlessness has been given the first place. This is not a mere accident, explains Vinoba. "Without truth, good qualities have no value; but for truth, fearlessness is essential." "In an atmosphere charged with fear, good qualities cannot grow. Fearlessness is, therefore, the commander of all good qualities."

"While in front, Fearlessness stands alert, Humility guards

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the rear. This is an excellent arrangement. Here twenty-six qualities are enumerated. If we have twenty-five of these qualities, but have *ahamakara*, egoism or pride in these, there is every chance of stealthy attack from behind in which we shall lose all that we have now. That is why the virtue called Humility is stationed in the rear. In the absence of humility, there is no knowing when victory will turn into defeat. Thus by placing fearlessness in front and humility in the rear we can develop all the good qualities".

The three demonic ambitions are described as power, culture and wealth. Apart from political power Vinoba explains that the desire of one region or notion to impose its culture on others is a very wrong ambition and leads to highly undersirable results. Attachment to wealth and material well-being is obviously suicidal to one's spiritual growth. In order to overpower these satanic tendencies, it is imperative to attain control over our senses or *indriyas*.

According to Vinoba, the Seventeenth Chapter tells us about the *yoga* of '*karya-krama*'—regularity in action. "The sum is free and independent. He is regular—it is in this regularity that the essence of his freedom lies. We have seen from experience that, if we are in the habit of walking regularly on the same road, we are able to think about other things while walking, without paying attention to our steps. If we walk on a new road every day, all our attention is concentrated on the road. Then the mind can have no freedom. It follows that, in order that life may not be burdensome but joyful, we should limit our activities and order them aright."

Vinoba, then, explains in simple terms the inner meanings of the three terms *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas* : "To help human society to progress is *dana*. The effort made to replenish Nature's loss is *yajna*; the help given through body, mind, substance and other means to discharge the debt to society is *dana*. Besides these, there is a third order, that of the body. This too wears out day by day. We wear out by use of our mind, our knowledge,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

our senses. *Tapas* or austerity, has been prescribed in order to remove the defects and distortions that arise in the body."

Towards the end of his talk, Vinoba highlights the importance of purity in food for achieving physical purity and discipline. "For true service, purity in food is necessary. As is the food, so is the mind. The food we eat should be regulated. Not what food we take, but how much we take, is the more important question. It does matter what food we choose to eat, but it matters even more that it is in right measure".

In this connection, Vinoba voices strong criticism of the growing habit of eating meat by imitating the West : "I stress this because at present a great many people have begun to show a linking for meat. Today, the cultures of the East and of the West are influencing each other. I om confident that the ultimate outcome of this will be good. The impact of Western culture disturbs our insensible beliefs. When blind faith is shaken, there is no harm in it. What is good will remain, and what is bad will be destroyed. But blind unbelief should not replace blind belief. It is not as if belief alone can be blind, that it has a monopoly of blindness. Unbelief too can be blind."

During his last discourse on the Eighteenth Chapter, Vinoba emphasizes the point that renunciation must be accompanied with discrimination. He relates an interesting incident in the life of Gorakhnath : "Machindranth told Gorkhanath, 'Wash this boy and bring him back.' Gorakhnath caught hold of the boy's feet, dashed his head against a stone and spread him on a hedge to dry. Machindranath asked him, 'Have you brought the boy washed ?' Gorakhnath answered, 'I have washed him white and put him out to dry.' Is a boy washed this way? We don't wash clothes and boys in the same way. There is a lot of difference between the two."

Another significant example of maintaining a right and balanced attitude of mind has been givin: "Once there was a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

man who, feeling that there was someting inauspicious about his house, left 'it and went and settled in another village. That in turn seemed dirty to him, and he went away to the forest. There, as he sat under a mango tree, a bird's droppings fell on his head. He said, 'This forest too is unfriendly', and went and stood in a river. In the river, the sight of the big fish eating up the small fish filled him with disgust. 'The wole of creation', he concluded, 'is unkind'. 'There is no way out except through death'. So he came out of the water and kindled a fire. Then a gentleman who was passing by said, 'My brother, why are you preparing to die ?' He replied, 'Because the whole world is inauspicious'. The man said, 'If the unclean body of yours, this mass of flesh, begins to burn, how it would stink ! I live close by. Where could I go? When a single hair burns, it smells so awful ! And now, all this flesh of yours will burn ! Just think a little of the stench you will spread.' Then the man was bewildered and exclaimed, 'If one can neither live in this world nor die in it, what is one to do?' That is to say, if we go about condemning everything as bad and inauspicious, and rejecting it, we simply cannot carry on."

Vinoba further explains the difference between *karma* and *kriya*, action and activity. "One, in his anger, shouts aloud; another expresses it without opening his mouth. The *jnani*, the seer, makes not the slightest effort, does no *kriya*; but he performs infinite action *karma*. The mere fact of his being can confer infinite benefit on the world. His presence is enough Though his hands and feet do no work, he still works. As *kriya*, the activity, becomes subtler, and subtler, *karma*, action, becomes greater."

I have quoted from Vinoba's *Talks on the Gita* in extenso with a definite purpose. For I am convinced that the commanding heights' of Vinoba's personality do not rest on his being the first satyagrahi or his initiating a revolutionary non-violent movement of Bhoodan and Gramdan, but essentially depend on the remarkable originality of his thought and the versatility of his mind. I do not have a shadow of doubt that even when the traces of his Bhoodan movement will be hard to detect by research

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

scholars, his discourses on the *Gita* would shine out for centuries to come as glittering jewels of a great *Right* who lived in flesh and blood on the Indian soil for several decades, shunning the limelight of public life but delving into the innermost depths of science and spirituality.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

2

Social Ideology

Vinoba Bhave was a true Gandhian and acted in a non-violent and disciplined way in anti-Raj satyagraha launched by Mahatma Gandhi from time to time. Through his speeches and writings and deep connection with the masses of our country, he pleaded for their socio-economic upliftment. During his long career in the service of our nation, he along with his ardent fowllowers, visited lakhs of village to propagate his social ideology. He felt unhappy to see people leading primitive life in the far-flung areas. He sat and lived with them, listened to their problems and tried to solve them. Thus his idea was that of harmonious development of mankind, a peaceful social life and contentment in domestic environments. He always explained thus : 'Our task in the villages is to explain to the people that we are all one and that we must try to practise this quality in our daily living.'

Undoubtedly our more than one half a million villages scattered in the far-flung area were steeped in poverty. The subsistence on land had become acute day by day and an average person's life was sub-standard. On account of lack of avenues for jobs, the condition of a common person tilted towards deterioration. There was scarcity of water, electricity and other basic necessities, and all this had led to the backwardness of the people of our sub-continent.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Vinoba Bhave, like Mahatma Gandhi, visualised all this and collected several details which could be worked out for all round development, in the villages. The man-power he argued, should be properly utilised by providing him with the basic and necessary tools in his possession. Even women should not lay behind and should do the work nearly in order to make both ends meet. The proper utilization of manpower would thus bring about a new socio-economic order in our society.

Time and again Vinoba Bhave exported the villages to shun their petty habits leading to mutual fends. Rather the approach of their life must be that of self-help, sympathetic support to others and non-possession of unwanted material. He also advised them to decide among themselves any kind of suspicion and doubt leading to the injury on their socio-economic status. He thus argued about the pleasant rela ionship among human beings

(Speech at the Sarvodaya Sammelan, Chandil, Singhbhum, Bihar on 9 March 1935)

This is a gathering of workers. We have met here to offer to God whatever we have done during the past year and to carry away with us provision for the year ahead. At this juncture we need to give some thought to three things : our methods, our programmes, and the ways in which our work my be integrated.

No matter where we are working or what we are doing the state of the world is such that work cannot be done in isolation, from the total world picture. We cannot take the smallest step without being continually aware of the influences at work in the world, the new trends which arise, the interplay of ideas and the conflicts of emotion. It is plain that the world is in a very unsettled state; it is also in a very explosive side. Any thing may happen, at any moment. The mental climate, and the outward conditions, are equally unsettled.

An Evil Paradox

A month or two ago a number of intellectuals and learned

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

men met in Delhi and held deliberations on the philosophy of non-violence. Our revered Rajendra Babu, in addressing the gathering, said : "No nation in the world today has the courage and confidence to declare that it can govern without an army." He went on to say, sorrowfully : "Even though we had Gandhiji's teaching direct from his own lips, even though we worked side by side with him, India herself today lacks that courage." Our great leader, Pandit Nehru, has said on many occasions that : "Not a single world problem can be solved by force of arms." These comrades of ours, on whom our country has laid the responsibility of leadership, believe from their hearts in non-violence and have no faith in the efficacy of violence. And yet they have had to assume responsibility for forming, extending and strengthening the army. This is the evil paradox of the situation in which we find ourselves today.

We are in the position of putting our faith in one thing while in action we are forced into something else. It is our heart's desire to see non-violence accepted throughout India and the world, so that men no longer fear one another, but live together in love. Our hearts are filled with the faith that only love can endure and that love can overcome every obstacle. At the same time we possess something called the intellect (*buddhi*). Heart and intellect are inextricably intermingled; each is a part of the other. On the one hand, the heart tells us that no problem can be solved by violence, and that even when violence appears to solve one problem, ten new ones will arise in its place. The intellect, however, partakes of all three *gunas*; it can be responsive, it can also be dull; it can see, it can also be blind. This heterogencous intellect tells us, "We cannot get rid of the army. The people whom we represent have neither the strength nor the skill to do witnout it. As their representatives, therefore, it is our duty to see that an army is organised, expanded and properly equipped."

This is the state of affairs. Our desire to give our energies to some constructive service is a "heart" desire only, and our intellect intervenes to say : "But the army must be organised efficiently, and that means organising the kind of industry which

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

can maintain it." For those who have no faith in the spinning-wheel this poses no problem, but for people like us the question arises whether arms production can be organised on the basis of spinning and other village industries. Their intellect—and ours too, for we cannot stand aside—says: "No; small-scale industries like these cannot provide a base for arms production."

'Community projects' have now been started in some places, and the government wishes to extend their work to all our five hundred thousand villages, so that the problem of poverty may be overcome and the national wealth and prosperity increased. But if world war should break out tomorrow, I doubt whether even one of those projects would survive, and even those who have organised them share my doubt. The intecllect would at once take charge, and the heart would be silenced. "The main thing now", the intellect would assert, "is to save the nation."

I say this in a spirit of self-examination. If we ourselves were to occupy the seats of power and carry the responsibilities our friends now carry, our actions would differ very little from theirs. The seats of power are magic chairs. Those who occupy them are obliged to think in a narrow, limited, artificial and conventional way. They are compelled willy-nilly to think in terms of world trends as they appear to be. The trend is to fear. America, Russia and other big countries fear one another. Weaker nations like India and Pakistan also fear one another. And even though we are covinced that none of our problems can be solved by these mutual fears, weapons or arimes, we still base our policies on military strength, and the strange thing is that we are helpless to give it up. When a man is driven helplessly into any action, it is no matter for pride, it is a matter for pity. We in India are in that pitiable condition.

Our Distinctive Task

Rajendra Babu has reminded us that the people look to the Sarvodaya Samaj to fulfil one task—that of faithfully maintaining its own basic principles, and of creating a congenial atmosphere for these principles to be practised today. If the Sarvodaya Samaj could do this it would be of the greatest

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

assistance to our national government. In fact, if one of us today were to take office, and become involved in all the schemings and stratagems of office, neither his schemes nor his stratagems would be of as much help to the government as the efforts of the man who devotes himself to building up a society free from military force.

People often ask me why I am out of politics and why I do not accept responsibility in the government of the nation. I answer : "Two bullocks have already been yoked to the cart; of what use would it be to take me as a third? The best way for me to help the cart along is to repair the road so that it can travel in the right direction." We must devote ourselves to building up an independent "people's power" (lok-shaki), and that in itself will be our true service both to the government and to the nation.

By "an independent people's power" I mean a power inhering in the people, which is totally opposed to the power of violence, but other than the power of the law, and which it must be our task to call into being. We have handed over the power of the law to our government, and although it contains an element of coercion, we regard it as being in a different class from out-and-out violence because society as a whole has conferred these legal powers on the government. It is our task to create a situation in the country in which there will be no need to use even these sanctions of the law. If we can do that we shall have fulfilled our own true *dharma*. If, on the other hand, in our greed for results we depend on the power of the law for carrying on our public service, the distinctive work which is expected of us will not only not be completed, it may even be hindered.

Public service based on legal authority is certainly possible, and for that very reason we in India have sought, and assumed, control of our own government. So long as society needs a government, we must not shirk the responsibility of government. The duties of government are undoubtedly a service to the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

nation, but they are not the kind of service which can ever make the sanctions of law unnecessary.

I will iilustrate what I mean by an example. Picture a battle-field where soldiers are being wounded. Those who go to the help of the wounded are filled with compassion; they serve friend and foe alike at the risk of their own lives, like a mother serving her children. There is no doubt about their human kindness and the value of their service. But they cannot stop war. Their service is bound up with a society which accepts war. One and the same war machine has two parts, one to kill, the other to rescue the wounded. The contrast between these two functions is clear; everyone can see that one is cruel and the other merciful. War is made up of the cruelty of the one and the humanity of the other, and both work together to ensure that war goes on. To speak in the blunt language of science. so long as we accept war at all we are guilty of its crimes, whether we fight or whether we nurse the wounded. I have given this example to show that we must not imagine that we can create a merciful government by a few merciful actions. Government in essence means brute force.

If our works of mercy are subject to the overall authority of the kingdom of brute force and done by order of the unmerciful, we are not doing our real work. On the surface this Government-sponsored work appears humane, even constructive; we may be tempted to take it up by the prospect of quick results, without looking at it in the wider perspective. If so, we shall no doubt achieve something, but we shall not give the service which is our own distinctive responsibility and which both we and others regard as our true *dharma*. It is our duty to find means of putting an end to war itself. This does not mean that we should refuse to help the wounded—we should certainly do what we can to care for them—but we should always remember that this is not our real work.

The Place and Limits of Legislation

Let me take another example. Everyone says to me : "You

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

seem to carry some weight with the government; why do not you put pressure on it to get legislation to secure land distribution without compensation?" I tell these friends : "I am not blocking legislation; on the contrary, the work I am doing will make legislation much easier, even though I may not be cent per cent successful, but only 75% or 5%. I am not obstructing legislation, I am facilitating it. I am creating a climate of opinion in its favour". But if I were to go further, if I were to declare and insist that without making laws, nothing can be done, then I should have betrayed my own *dhrama*. My *dharma* calls on me to believe that we can evoke such a spirit in the hearts of the people, that without the aid of legislation, and no matter what the law may say, they themselves will distribute the land. Do mothers need a law to induce them to nurse their babies? There is a power in the heart of man which enriches his life, and that power is love. Man depends on love, he is born of love, he is nourished by love and when the time comes for him to leave the world, he dies content if he can see his dear ones around him at the last. If, in spite of this experience of the power of love, we have not the courage to appeal to it in the wider life of society, and go on demanding legislation instead, we shall not be able to help our government in the way it expects of us—by building up "people's power". This is our task, to build up a people's power which is distinct from the power of the State. I say that these two powers are distinct; I do not say that they are opposed, or incompatible. What is incompatible with people's power is the power of violence.

Let me cite one more example. The government wishes to help in the *Khadi* programme and has established a Khadi Board. Pandit Nehru expressed his surprise that something which should have been done four years earlier (soon after Independence) had been so long delayed. The Government desires to extend the scope of *Khadi* work and increase production. It is our duty, and that of the Charkha Sangh to help the government in this work. The Charkha Sangh has experience in this field, and the assistance of men of experience will be needed. But here again, in my opinion, although we

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

should give the government the help expected of a knowledgeable citizen, we must not become wholly absorbed in its programme; otherwise we shall not be able to carry out our own *Khadi* programme properly. We may help the Government as much as we can with production, but at the same time we should be clear about our own point of view and carry on our own work accordingly. Let us never lose sight of the fact that our *khadi* work is a means to the establishment of a village-centred polity.

Pandit Nehru came to see me and spoke with great affection and I listened humbly to what he had to say. When he asked my advice, I expressed my views briefly. I said : "We expect the government to treat *khadi* and village industries in the same way as it treats the subject of literacy. We accept the principle that every citizen must be able to read and write, because this is an essential part of citizenship. The government therefore recognises an obligation to make everyone literate. Circumstances may make it impossible to succeed completely but so long as we do not succeed, so long as some remain illiterate, our conscience will continue to prick us. Let our government, in the same way, accept the proposition that it is its duty to teach every citizen and villager of India to spin. Let the government accept the idea that a villager or townsman who does not know how to spin is not properly educated. The people will do the rest. We do not ask the government for money. The greatest assistance that they can give us is the acceptance of the idea." Nehru heard me with patience, and I think he liked the proposal. He said half-jokingly : "If everyone is taught to spin, how will the yarn be used?" I countered : "If everyone is to be taught to read, how will the reading be used?" I have met many persons who have had two or three years of schooling but never found any use for it for the rest of their lives. But, as you see, I asked no more for *khadi* than this, that a popular government should be ready to fulfil the desires expressed by its people. If I had gone further, and demanded that *khadi* should be forced upon the people by law, I should have shown myself ignorant of my own

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

duty, and forgotten my own slogan, that we must establish a people's power distinct from the power of law.

I have given you illustrations of my theme from Khadi and from the Bhoodan programme. We have our own method of solving the land problem. If our government, democratic as it is, decides to tackle the problem it will do so by legislative authority. There is nothing wrong in that, it is merely a different way of doing things. But Government help of this kind will not nurture the power of the people, although it may increase their prosperity. Our aim, on the other hand, is not merely that people should be prosperous, it is that they should realise their power. This lies at the root of all our work; if that objective is kept steadily in view, there will be no need to spend much time on discussions of method. Every constructive activity will be characterised by methods which we may except to result in an attitude of independence and self-reliance vis-a-vis the authority of the government.

If we think along these lines it naturally follows that the two main characteristics of our work will be discipline of thought and a wide sharing of authority.

The Discipline of Thought

By 'discipline of thought' I mean that ideas should be clearly understood and expounded. Nothing should be accepted without understanding the principles involved. It should be a matter for regret when anyone accepts our ideas without having understood them; we should be satisfied with explaning our ideas without imposing our will on others. Some people say that the Sarvodaya Samaj is a 'loose organisation. A loose organisation would certainly be useless and serve no purpose. But the Sarvodaya Samaj is not loose organisation; it is not an organisation at all. It is a society based solely on ideas. We compel none to carry them out without first understanding them, and we will not obey anyone's orders without first considering and approving them. We meet only to exchange our ideas. The Koran, in singing the praises of the saints, says that their work is marked by mutual consul-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tation. We too must devote ourselves to mutual consultation and pooling of ideas. We should be happy when people refuse to accept our ideas because they are not convinced; we should be very unhappy if someone puts these ideas into practice without understanding them. It seems to me that there is more strength in such an organisation than in one which is efficient, clearcut and bound by regulations. I am not saying that a strictly regulated legalistic organisation has no power at all; but that its power is not *Shiva-Shakti*, it is not a power for good. It is because we wish to create *shiva-shakti* that we desire only the discipline of ideas.

It follows, then, that one aspect of our work is dissemination of ideas. From this point of view I can see why the Lord Buddha established the *Bhikshu Sangha* and Shankaracharya the *Yati Sangha*, I have, it is true, come to the conclsion that we ourselves should not form any such Sangha, because experience shows that their defects are likely to outweigh their advantages. Nevertheless we ought to reflect on the reasons why those great men felt the need of Sanghas and on the ideas that lay behind them. We want our ideas to flow out to people like a perennial spring of water, and therefore, we need messengers to carry them. Without such messengers the Sarvodoya Samaj cannot do its work. We must take every opportunity for meeting people and coming into close touch with them. People are not likely to accept our ideas at the first hearing : our workers must be filled with such enthusiasm that they will enjoy repeated discussions with the same groups, their faith and confidence in the power of the idea must be strong enough for that.

The fact is that many of us have got entangled in various institutions. These institutions have their own importance no doubt. Nevertheless let us show our regard for what they stand for without becoming attached to the institutions as such. Let them continue their work, but let some of their members be always moving about among the people. If we do not organise our work on some such lines, our ideas will lose their vigour, and the discipline of ideas will not be effective.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The Bihar workers say with some pride—and the pride is justified—that it was the Bihar Congress that first took up *Bhoodan*, which was later approved by the All-India Congress at the Hyderabad sitting. But what does this approval amount to?—a circular from the top, from the All-India office, that 'every congressman must help the *bhoodan* movement'. As the Ganga comes down to Haridwar from the Himalaya, so the circular comes down to the State offices. The Ganga moves on from Haridwar to its lower reaches; the circular too moves on towards the district offices. No matter how far the Ganga flows, it remains nothing but water : and in exactly the same way the circular remains nothing but paper. Like begets like, every species reproduces its own kind, and circulars beget nothing but circulars. Yet the work must be done after all, by the village people themselves. And how is this circular to reach the villages when in simply goes from one office to another?

So the work of the *bhoodon yagna* will not be successful unless we reach every home. Our goal is to collect twenty five lakhs of acres of land from five lakhs of villages. Put like that is seems easy. Five acres per village on an average is not a big thing. But who is to reach every village? Therefore the most important tool we possess is the dissemination of our ideas, we must plan for it and make our programme accordingly.

But if you are not bold enough for this, if you quail before the prospect of carrying the message to every village, and turn instead to short cuts by proposing legislation, then I must tell you that making laws, and relying on laws, is not our job. By all means let there be laws, good laws, as quickly as possible. But if we get involved in the law making, we shall be forsaking our own calling, our own *dharma*, for an alien vocation. Our own job, our *dharma*, is to travel round the villages and to maintain our faith in our ideas. Do not say that the work will never be done by discussion of ideas. The work will never be done in any other way. It can be done only through acceptance of the idea. The power of the idea, the discipline of the idea is our first tool.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The Sharing of Authority

Our second tool is that of decentralisation of authority. This means that all capacity for work, and all power that accrues from work, should be built up in every village instead of being centralised. To that end, we desire that every village should have the right to decide for itself what things should come into it and what should not. For instance, if a village decides to run a village oil-press and therefore excludes mill-processed oil, it should have the right to stop mill oil from coming in. When we propose this, the government tells us that it is not possible to have "a state within a state" ; but what we must understand is that unless we distribute power and authority in this manner, military rule is inevitable. We cannot do without the army today, we shall not be able to do so tomorrow. In practice you will have to make up your minds to make use of the army, and therefore to maintain it in good order. In that case, do not pretend that you want ever to be rid of it.

But if we really do desire to rid ourselves of the army, we must do what God has done. God has distributed to each of his creatures a share of intelligence. Everyone has been given his portion, the scorpion, the serpent, the lion and the man. True, some creatures have less and some more; but God gave a share to each one and commanded them to manage their own lives by their own intelligence. The Creation has worked so smoothly on this plan that God is able to take complete rest, so much so that men even doubt that He really exists. We should do the same; we should so manage the government that people doubt whether there is a government. If people were to begin saying that India appears to be without a government, you may be sure that the rule of non-violence has begun.

That is why we call for *Gramswaraj*. We want to see the power to manage its own affairs vested in the village, that is, in the hands of the villagers. They should for example, stand up and decide for themselves what things they will produce, and they should inform the government what things they wish to exclude. If the Government cannot or will not stop these things

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

coming in, the villagers must be bold enough to oppose it. If this kind of people's power is built up it will be a great help to the government, and will do away with military sanctions; but without it the power of the army will never be ended. Even if Delhi were to acquire the intellect of the Lord Brahma, with four brains, and eyes for all the four points of the compass, it could never plan for, and manage, all the affairs of every village with benefit to them all.

Therefore we should have village planning instead of national planning. I said 'instead of'. It would be far better if 'national planning' really meant 'village planning', and that Delhi should give the villages whatever help they may need in their planning. This is the second part of our programme. Whatever we do is in the direction of decentralisation of authority, and that is why we wish to distribute land in the villages.

When the question of the land is raised, some persons want to prescribe a "ceiling", a maximum legal holding. This proposal has been put forward ever since the *bhoodan* movement began to take hold of the people. But I say, first decide the minimum to be given to every one. Why do I say this? It is because I desire to distribute authority. Today the labourers are all working for someone else. They work, but the direction of the work is not in their hands. The wheels of work roll on, but the workers are not responsible. We want them to put into their work not merely their hands and their feet, but their brains and their hearts also. There are some who argue that Indian labourers have such limited intelligence that it is better they should work under the direction of others. But that is not the way of non-violence. What intelligence they possess is our capital; if we let that go, we have no other intelligence to take its place.

Let us admit that a capitalist is often more intelligent than a labourer. But the combined intelligence of all the labourers in the country is equally by no other intelligence, and our country will be much poorer if it is not put to use. The labourers' intelligence whatever it be, must be fully employed.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

At the same time their mental powers must be stimulated and one method of doing it is to give them land. The gift of land is part of an educational process, it is a tool for developing their intelligence.

Let us now turn our attention to our own movement. We have built up a Sarva Seva Sangh and also a Sarvodaya Samaj. The Sarva Seva Sangh will do the work. It will not be a loose organisation but a strong institution bound by rules. The Sarvodaya Samaj will not be an organisation at all, loose or otherwise. It will be a fellowship of those who believe in the power of the idea. It is our task to strengthen further its basis of ideas. We do not want to create merely a more disciplined group; we must work to make it more fruitful of ideas and more ready to accept ideas as the basis of living. We must work for the creation of a fellowship of ideas among all members of the Samaj, whether they are present today or not, whether their names are listed or not. One way of doing this is to be moving about continually, as I have already described, to disseminate our ideas. Another way is to publicise Sarvodaya literature and encourage study, reflection and discussion of it. For this purpose there should be study groups which should make a comparative study of our ideas and those of other ideologies.

The Work of the Sarva Seva Sangh

We shall next take up a discussion of the progammes we have in hand in the Sarva Seva Sangh.

Bhoodan Yagna (The gift of land)

We have commenced the work of Bhoodan Yagna. In regard to that, my aim and object is that five crore (50,000,000) acres of land should change hands. We can do it; we can solve the land problem, if we all work for it. By "all" I do not mean only you me, only the Sarvodaya Samaj; I mean all who accept the idea, Congressmen, socialists and all others. We may be a hundred percent successful without legislation, or we may be only 75% or 50% successful, and the law will complete the task. I cannot say exactly what will happen; I am no prophet. But

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

however it happens, it will have to be done *mainly* by the power of the people. If it should be done *wholly* by them I should dance for joy; but I should be well content if it is done *mainly* by them. If it can be done, the next election will not set one good man against another in opposing parties, which happens today as it did when Bhishma fought Arjuna. We want no more contests between Bhishma and Arjuna, we want Ram to fight Ravana. A programme which can win the wholehearted devotion of all good men will put an end to their present differences. *Bhoodan Yagna* is such a basic programme.

Sampattidan (the gift of money)

I have started another programme along with this, which I call *Sampattidan Yagna*. Without it, the *Bhoodan* movement cannot succeed, and our programme of economic freedom and equality will not be fulfilled. The programme was in my mind from the beginning, but I had to do one thing at a time; besides, money is not so fundamental a thing as land. So I preferred to take up the land problem in the light of divine hand in Telangana. Later, when there began to be talk of a complete solution of the land problem in Bihar, I realised that it was possible only if the two movements were carried on side by side. But I am not going to handle that money. Here too authority must be dispersed. Those who offer us money will dispose of it themselves in accordance with our directive.

Sutranjali (the gift of hanks of yarn)

In addition to the above two, we have a third programme, namely offering of hanks of hand-spun yarn. This is a very powerful thing but we have not realised its power. Let us make this offering in memory of Gandhiji, and as a token of our belief in manual labour, and as a sign that we accept our responsibility for adding to the nation's wealth. I consider it a vote for Sarvodaya. It is a big thing. The only difficulty is that we have to collect it from door to door, in village after village. And that, in my opinion, is not a difficulty but an inspiration, because it gives us a chance to visit every home. We should expand this programme, and aim at a target in terms of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

lakhs, as we do for land. It will be most helpful in increasing faith in bodily labour.

Sramdan (The gift of labour)

I want to add one more thing. All the institutions we have established so far have been run on money. Wealthy people, good people, our friends and well-wishers, have helped us and we have accepted their help. There was nothing wrong in that. But now times have changed, now is the age of labour, and faith in labour must be instilled. Let us then establish a few institutions in each State, founded on manual work, and accepting no gifts except gifts of manual labour. My idea is that vigorous workers could be trained there who could both disseminate our ideas and carry on practical work.

Our Common Humanity and the Third Power

One word more, befor I close. This work of ours is not of a sectarian nature. We should not even call ourselves "the Sarvodaya group" because that also gives a wrong impression. Let us think of ourselves as human beings and nothing else. Otherwise even this Sarvodaya Samaj, with all its freedom from institutionalism, will little by little become a sect, a narrow group in which we shall be separated from others. Let us never allow our tongues to slip into labelling people as 'socialist', 'congresswala' or 'sarvodayawala'. Such terms will, of course, continue to be used, because there are men who wish to work under party names and find them useful. But we belong to no party; we are "the third power". In the vocabulary of world politics the "third power" consists of those who are not attached either to the American or to the Russian block. But in my vocabulary, the third power is that power which is opposed to the power of violence, and distinct from the power of the State. There are three kinds of power; first, that of violence; second, that of law; third, our kind of power which is neither the one nor the other. This third power is inherent in man as man, and we seek to realise it on the widest possible scale. And therefore it is not for us to form a separate sect; it is for us to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

identify ourselves with the common run of humanity and to work among men simply as fellow human beings.

Speech at the Gramdan Conference at Yelwal, Mysore, on 12 Sept. 1957

It is my fundamental faith that there is a divine spirit in the heart of man. Superficially there may be faults, but these are not of the inner essence. We need therefore to find a way of entering that inmost heart of man so that all its goodness is revealed. And a way can be found; I found it in Telengana. I asked for land, and a man came forward to give me land. To me this tiny incident was a sign from the Lord; it confirmed my faith in man.

It is against both *dharma* and reason to think that land can be individual property. And as I began to appeal for land in a spirit of love, so did people began to respond. A fresh wind began to blow as it were, and people came from far and near to join our pilgrimage. It mattered very little to me whether or not this movement would "Solve the land problem"; what mattered was that it was a kind of experiment in what Gandhiji had taught us. The world today is so terrified by violence that it cannot think clearly; it piles up more and more weopons because it sees no alternative, although weapons solve no problem. We were striking out a new way, and people came eagerly to see it.

Gandhiji always stressed the principle of trusteeship. Some people are under the impression that this call to relinquish land-ownership is something differen. if not contradictory, inconsisient with his ideas. I would like therefore to clarify this word "trustee". Parents are trustees for their children, and they are the best example of the real aims of trustees. One is that they consider the welfare of the children entrusted to them, before their own. Another is that as soon as the children have become capable of responsibility they will hand over charge. These are the two marks of a trustee. So that when I advise people to treat their property as a trust, I am in fact telling them to work for the completion of *gramdan*.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

People used to criticise *bhoodan* as tending to break up the land into very small fragments. I replied that my work is not to break up the land, but to join together divided hearts. This union of hearts is the chief aim of *bhoodan*; once we achieve it, everything else will follow.

If I had talked about *gramdan* from the beginning it would never have come about. It could only come into being as a result of *bhoodan*. In *bhoodan*, there was compassion; in *gramdan* there is co-operation, and an aspiration for equality; but this equality must be based upon compassion. I do not believe that an equality brought about by other, artificial methods can result in real well-being.

We must understand the concept of *gramdan* in its full meaning. People commonly think that once the land-owners have given up their land, *gramdan* has been achieved. I also talked like that in the beginning but then I realised that I was wrong. *Gramdan* is not going to come about merely by gifts of land. People commonly think in terms of "haves", "have nots". But one day it dawned on me that by the grace of God every human being as a "have", there is no real "have not" in the world. Some have land, some have wealth, some have strength to labour, some intelligence, some love. Everyone has something, but they keep what they have for use inside the four walls of their homes. There is no lack of love, but it is all locked away inside the house, and outside it competition prevails. But love cannot grow strong if it is confined to the house.

In *gramdan* therefore we do not merely ask the landowner for land. We say to the labourer : "Up to now we have spent our wages only on our own families, we have considered our earnings to be ours; but now we must offer them to the village." Gramdan is only complete when this spirit is there. The full implementation of *gramdan* means that whatever one possesses should be put at the disposal of the community as a whole. It will not work if some are expected only to give, and others only to receive. The principles and standards of *dharma* apply to everyone. Truth is for all alike, and so is compassion.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The principle of *gramdan* then is far-reaching and comprehensive, and needs the co-operation of all. It applies to village industries. If we hope ever to see peace and a non-violent social order, then it is essential that every village should be self-supporting. People should work together so that all raw material produced in the village is processed in the village, and so that the tools and methods of production are continully improved. This means education, education linked with industry work integrated with knowledge. Today we have the pitiable spectacle of the farmer who has not enough to eat but sends his children to college. If this happened because of a thirst for knowledge it would be all right but what he wants is for his children to be able to avoid hard work. The son as a result does not follow his father's occupation unless he is obliged to, and has no interest in it. As a nation we shall neither increase our production nor develop a strong character unless we change our educational methods and unite knowledge with work.

The Upanishad regards the production of more food as a religious duty, to be sealed by a vow. I am no traditionalist. I say that only if science and *ahimsa*—that is to say, spiritual knowledge—are joined together, then heaven can come on earth, and for that, as many people as possible must be engaged not only in agriculture but in industry. But everyone ought to have some direct experience of agriculture also. Nothing, not even religious music and ritual, contributes so much as agricultural work to the steadying of the mind as well as to the health of the body. So every family should be given at least half an acre of land; the remainder may be farmed co-operatively.

I am naturally disposed to co-operative enterprises. The idea of *gramdan* raises co-operation to the level of community, and in this community-co-operation "community projects" find their place. I believe that the atmosphere of India is becoming favourable to this comprehensive vision of *gramdan*.

An address at the Sarvodaya Sammelan, Raipur, December 1963

We are very ordinary people yet society expects much

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

from us. Why is this? It is because everyone knows that however impracticable our principles may seem to be, unless these principles are accepted the world will not only make no progress, it cannot even survive. People regard us as poineers who are striving to bring in the new society of the future, and they look upon us with keen interest as the representatives of the time-spirit. This work of ours is of much more than temporary significance, for if it should fail, society itself is doomed.

The aim and purpose of the Sarvodaya Samaj is to secure the welfare of *all*, not merely of majority or a minority, but of every individual. It is open to everyone who believes in this purpose; all you have to do is to say that you are one of us. It is an association based on trust, trust in a man's word. Man himself is the greatest of the spiritual values upon which the life of society is founded. The others are the small change, humanity is the sterling coin. This Sarvodaya Samaj does not recognise all the distinctions of language, caste, sect, class etc. The essence of its philosophy is the oneness of the self, the soul. There are differences of culture and tradition which on a narrow view appear to divide us; but if we take a broader view we realise that humanity is one. For us, this humanity is the supreme value, and the soul of humanity is one. It may seem impossible to put this truth into practice today but the Samaj recognizes and believes that what is impracticable today may be practicable tomorrow. Meanwhile we must put all our strength into the three-fold programme of *gramdan*, *khadi* and *shantisena*.

1. Gramdan

We have decided that ownership of land in a *gramdan* village should vest in the *gram-sabha* (village-council). The original owners will continue to use the land which remains after the landless have been given a share, but they will make over the rights of ownership to the *gramsabha*.

Gramdan is an act in which everyone makes an offering. We consider the *gram-sabha* as a Mother-Goddess; we make

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

our offerings, and accept for our own use whatever *prasad* (divine gift) she may return to us. This is a beautiful and attractive idea; what joy it would bring if it were to be put into practice !

When I began the *bhoodan* work in Telengana I told people I had come to "loot with love". I said this because the village s there had been only too familiar with a different kind of looting. Now I merely say that I have come to show my love, and thus I am able to touch all hearts with no distinctions of party.

This approach is reflected in the new plan for *gramdan*. Some have feared that this is a lowering of standards, watering-down. Previously we asked for one-sixth of the land and collected 50 millon acres. Now we ask for one-twentieth of the land and 15 million acres. But the land we get now will be cultivated land, whereas the fifty million acres contained a lot of useless land. Another important feature of the new plan is that every year the *gramsabha* will receive one-twentieth of the harvest. That is to say the village gets not only the land, but the fruits of the labour, which is a big thing.

The new plan also means that giving for common good becomes a continuing feature of the life of the village. It is not a question of giving once and being done with it. The annual harvest-giving is a form of education for the whole village, young and old, men and women alike. We need such a continuous stream of sharing to purge the world of the evils of the continual pleasure-seeking that goes on today.

This new plan also leaves room for future gifts of land as need arises. Once love has entered the heart, the village community will find ways of sharing the land more widely. I say this from experience. While I was in Orissa some villagers came to me with their *gramdan* pledge. I asked for a few figures, and found that one-twentieth of the land would not be enough to meet the needs of the landless. They at once raised their gift to one-tenth. Once we have touched

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

their hearts we can leave everything to the villagers; they will realise their responsibility and give whatever is needed.

It is also said that while this plan gives the ownership of land to the *gram-sabha*, it will not ensure equality of possession, This is because the present owners will continue in possession, and the land cannot be transferred, without their consent or that of their heirs. This seems to limit our demand for renuciation of ownership. But this is not so. If the custom of regular sharing is maintained, and villagers assume responsibility the movement will go on and the work will develop.

Gramdan is a revolution. We are convinced that a real revolution can only come about by non-violent means; a violent revolution leads to a counter-revolution. Revolution demands a methods which will generate power among the people by *gramdan* we are not weakening but strengthening the revolution. Our revolutionary fervour is second to none.

2. Khadi

We people consider it fundamental that everyone in a *gramdan* village should produce yarn. It is usually said that food comes first in importance and clothing second. But we should not accept this. Clothing protects not merely the body but also the virtue. In our culture we wear clothes to cover our nakedness. Clothes are a mark of Civilisation and everyone needs a minimum even if only a loin-cloth. Clothing is therefore even m ore important than food.

We want every village to stand on its own feet, growing its own food and making its own cloth. The kind of basic industry should be part and parcel of *gramdan*. If *gramdan* is Sita, then industries are Ram. This is the programme we must take with us from this meeting.

Some people will probably tell us that this also is impracticable. Of what use are such small tools, they will ask, in this machine age? But as Pandit Nehru says, even after fifteen years of planning we in India have not been able to better the lot of our poorest people. We have no confidence

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that even after forty years of planning we shall be able to give them the means to keep body and soul together. What is to be done? Pandit Nehru now admits that "perhaps we should adopt the method Gandhiji used to advocate, of setting our millions of people to productive work with the use of small tools and household implements." Our leaders have begun to realise that *khadi* and village industries are essential to the welfare of the country, at least for the next fifty years.

Only village *khadi* is real *khadi*. We cannot claim that the cloth we have produced so far is really a symbol of non-violence. There is very little non-violence about it; a bit of what the English call 'charity', but no compassion. Good work has been done, but it has not been able to make people one, or to encourage them to think for themselves. The spirit of compassion will not rest content till this is achieved, and it is good that we are all agreed that a new approach must be made.

As I said before, *gramdan* and *khadi* must go together. The labourer, the moneyed man and landowner must sit together in the *gram-sabha* and make plans for a strong and self-reliant village. There will also be cottage industries and the manufacture of *khadi*. There will also be measures for relieving debt, providing loans, formation of capital and reserves for bad years. There will also be a *Shanti-sena*.

3. Shanti Sena

We now come to the third programme, *Shanti Sena*, without which we cannot survive The President of the Sarvodaya Sammelan, Sri Jugatram, has proposed that every person should give one year of life for *Shanti Sena* work. This would not be by any means easy, there are all sorts of difficulties, especially for married men. The idea is that the volunteers would be given their maintenance, they would have altogether two months' training and ten month's work, in alternating periods. Then they would go back to their own houses and occupations and promote peace in their own community and a second batch would go for training. They would all be ready to work in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

areas of tension or during emergencies. How far we can carry out such a plan I do not know, but without something of kind we shall have no peace or security.

The *Shanti Sainiks* have begun to wear a yellow head-cloth as a distinguishing mark. Some people feel that this uniform might encourage the *Shanti Sena* to take up a 'separatist' attitude and become a kind of sect. No one could be more completely opposed to the sectarian spirit than I am. But when I watched the *Shanti Sena* rally yesterday I was really inspired. There is no sectarianism about it. When *Shanti Sainiks* are involved in all the turmoil of a riot, they must have a way of recognising one another. This is a fact of experience, and the yellow cloth meets the need. The *Shanti Sena* is above all parties; the question of sectarianism does not arise.

We need a *Shanti Sena* in every village and every town. I am ready to give it advice and affection but nothing else. Its needs can be met very simply if *Sarvodaya-patras* are used everywhere; if the *Shanti Sainiks* are supported by the people's "vote for peace" of which the *Sarvodaya patra* is the symbol they will have truly non-violent strength behind them, and their work will be successful. When the people depend on the army for their security they lose their independence; this must not happen with the *Shanti Sena*, and the way to prevent it is that it should be maintained by the will of the people themselves, expressed through the *Sarvodaya Patra*.

Gramdan, Khadi, Shantisena—this is our threefold programme. To this, Trinity, these three seen as one, we must offer our service. If the three aspects are separated, they will all wither away. In all our work, therefore, we must think of them as one.

SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SCIENCE

My father was a scientist; my mother's bent was towards the spiritual knowledge. At school, science was my favourite subject, but I was also attracted by spiritual literature. These two streams of knowledge, the scientific and the spiritual,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

mingled together in my life. In my view they both deserve equal respect and have one and the same significance. The subject matter of the one is the external physical world, while that of the other is the inner world of man. Together they present a complete and integrated picture of the nature of the universe.

While I was in prison in June 1942 I meditated a great deal about the movement for Indian independence. My reflections led me to the conclusion that the only way to freedom, not only in India but throughout the world, is that Science and Self-knowledge should be integrated. There is no meaning in talking about the freedom of the country without first attaining freedom of the mind. The first thing to do, therefore, is to liberate the mind from its shackles, and this can be achieved only through *atma-jnan*, spiritual knowledge. "The kingdom of God is within you", says the Bible, and also "Thy kingdom come on earth". I became convinced that the only way to establish the kingdom of God on earth is to unite science with self-knowledge. Otherwise, if science allies itself with violence, the two together will bring about universal destruction. The day of violence is over. Science is with us; no one can stop its progress and there is no need to try. But if science is to make genuine progress it must be guided aright, and only self-knowledge can provide that guidance.

I. Science

Science is the systematic study of the laws governing the processes of the physical world. It investigates the nature of water, air and other forms of matter, and the laws by which they operate.

Metaphysics is different. The mataphysician reflects on the basic nature of creation. He asks how the physical world came into being and what is its relation to concepts of "Spirit". He considers the nature of God and of the individual soul. Metaphysics in short considers the question "Why?," while science answers the question "How?"

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Man is an animal, but there is a difference between him and other animals. In what does that difference consist? The essential thing about other animals is their vital energy. The essential thing in man is his self-consciousness. Man also possesses this vital energy, but it is his conscious mind which rules. The animal's actions are governed by its vital energy—to flee, to attack, to leap and gambol, to swoop upon its prey. Children often behave in the same way. Their vital energy expresses itself in play; they may throw stones, not with any conscious aim or purpose, simply from an urge to throw. But if the stone hits someone and makes him bleed, the child realises what has happened, his mind comes into action.

Although a man is thus moved by his vital energies, he is predominantly a self-conscious being. There may be some dim mental life in even the lowest orders of animals, but it is there instinctive vitality which primarily controls them, whereas in man, it is the mind which takes control. He is swayed by his mental states, his emotions, desires, hopes and fears. He is played upon by courage and by terror, by honour and dishonour, by love and hatred, by attachment and contempt, according to the bent of his mind.

Science however is now warning man that this mental equipment is no longer sufficient, and that he must now build his life on a scientific foundation His old psychological equipment is useless. For man now holds in his hands the power of the atom —the very building-block of creation, and at the same time the energy which can destroy that creation itself. For life or for death, the atom is in man's hands. One atom bomb can put an end to man and beasts alike. Like a river in spate, which sweeps away whatever lies in its path, cattle and trees, men great and small together, the atom bomb cares nothing for psychology.

This is not all. Man has launched satellites which revolve round the earth like planets. This means that he must learn to think not only on an international scale but on an interplanetary scale. How can he do this from his habitual mental level?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

It is not a question of making a few modifications in our old mental assumptions, but of getting rid of them altogether. We cannot simply add a chapter XXI to the existing twenty chapters of our psychological text-books, we have to make a bonfire of lot of them. Our old ideas and accepted standards of conduct have to be completely abandoned.

Science operates on higher plane than that of the mind. The fact that science is higher than self-conscious mind has been known from ancient times. The Upanishads say that Brahma is first the vital principle (*pranx brahma*) then that He is mind (*mano brahma*) and lastly that He is science (*vignanam brahma*). The vital principle is the plane of animal life, the mental is that of man, the scientific is that of the sages. In those early times the scientific plane of living was known, but it was not then essential for all men. Some men attained to it in the course of striving for self-develoment, but it was thought of as an individual achievement only.

In the world of today this individualistic approach is no longer sufficient. It is now essential that all men should reach the plane of scientific thinking. Both spiritual insight and physical science call upon the mind to transcend itself.

That is why Sri Aurobindo spoke of the "supra-mental" state. He thinks of the mind as rising above itself to taste the immortal bliss of the vision and touch of God, and then returning to the earthly plane as what he calls an *avatar*. He does not regard spiritual liberation as an end in itself. The *avatar*, says Sri Aurobindo, is one who has trancended the mental plane and found liberation, and has then taken up his work in the world from the "supra-mental" level.

This is a magnificent vision, but we may not all aspire to become *avatars*. Even if we are not capable of such great things, however, we must still raise ourselves above the mental level. If we do not do so, there will be constant friction in society, and we shall be always pouring oil on to the machinery. We ought to be able to develop a social machinery which works

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

without friction and does not need oil. Our bodies *are* such machines; our bones and muscles work without friction because they operate by the power of love. If the foot is in trouble the hand goes to its help at once. If our social machinery were built like our bodies, we should have no need of the oil-can.

People ask whether the continued growth of science on its present lines will really make for the welfare of the world.

We should realise that science is not merely a product of the modern age. Scientific thinking began with the birth of man, and the science of today is founded upon the experiments and discoveries of previous ages. The first men did not know how to make fire; once that was discovered, how it transformed life! If there were no fire there would be no cooking; people would be shivering with cold, and how could herbal medicines be prepared.

The first men had no iron and made all their tools of stone. But when iron was discovered what a change was brought about!—penknives to sharpen pencils, needles to stitch cloth and scissors to cut it, ploughshares, axes and spades for the farmer.

Early men did not know how to milk cows. They hunted animals for food. What a genius that man must have been who first discovered that men could feed and care for cows and so enjoy their milk! All these great scientific discoveries, and that of the use of cotton to make cloth, go back to early times. So does that most wonderful discovery of human language.

Today we have reached the atomic age, when it is possible to manufacture goods by using atomic energy—when such decentralised industries can also be run in villages. Science has been growing from the earlist times until it has reached this stage, and it must and will continue to grow. The development of science will bring beauty into the life of men. The

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

more we know about nature, the better we can understand its laws and utilise its power.

But today there are some scientists, even brilliant ones, who are ready to sell their knowledge and skill for cash. So long as they are paid, they will carry out whatever research they are told to do whether its results are good or evil, even to making weapons of destruction. If these scientists were to vow that they will sell themselves to no one, that they will never have anything to do with the manufacture of weapons or researches into weaponry, the world would indeed be saved. But until society as a whole supports this stand these government-sponsored scientists will not behave so sensibly. Their researches into weaponry will only be stopped when the peoples of the world refuse to allow it.

If then we want science to go forward for good, it must be linked with non-violence. Science and non-violence together can bring heaven down to earth; science allied with violence can bring ruin. It is just because science has made so much progress that non-violence has assumed so much importance. If you want science to go on developing, you will have to accept non-violence. If you are not prepared for that, if you want violence to have a place in society, you must put a stop to science. In the old days it was different. When Bhima fought Jarasandha, one died and the other lived, and the world as a whole suffered no great loss. But the atomic weapons which are in our hands today could destroy the whole earth. If scientific knowledge is limited, violence cannot do so much damage; but if we want to develop science, the only way to save the world is to develop non-violence also. This means that men must settle their disputes by peaceful means, for it violence is used it will be the end of man and of his science along with him.

Science in itself is neither moral nor immoral; it is a moral and its standards of value must be supplied from elsewhere. Wrongly directed it leads to hell; rightly directed it may lead to heaven. The only power which can direct science aright is that of self-knowledge, spiritual knowledge.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The scientific attitude is a respect for facts; it is characterised by an objective, experimental attitude to life. If we have a scientific outlook we shall regard every aspect of life as a field for research. Malaria has decreased in India because we have applied science to the problem. We must act scientifically in every aspect of life, in deciding what clothes to wear, what bedding to use or how to organise our household goods. The light of science should enable us to get the maximum use from a minimum of possessions to build houses that are simple and easy to keep clean, to reduce the amount of time and labour needed for cooking to provide ourselves with a balanced diet and to see that no one falls ill. We ought to study what modern science can teach us about every aspect of daily living.

A scientific life is a simple life. People often think that science makes life more complicated, but this is a mistake. Science will help us, for example, to understand the value of fresh air. We are in the habit of covering ourselves with clothing all the twentyfour hours; some parts of the body are never exposed to the sunlight, and the body loses its vitality. Science teaches us to wear fewer clothes, and so to simplify life. In a scientific society men will build houses of one storey rather than ten, and see that each house has open space around it so that light and air can enter. Science will improve health so much that medicines will scarcely be needed, though the very best remedies will be available if need should arise. There will be doctors, but their services will not be much in demand. Good spectacles will be available, but men of a scientific outlook will take care of their eyesight. In the same way, aeroplanes will continue to fly, but they will be needed only occasionally; men will prefer to walk, and to enjoy themselves by rambling in the forests. And in a scientific world there will be little need, of artificial lighting, for people will prefer to spend the night sleeping under the stars. Science will not be used to deprive man of healthful bodily labour, but to lighten his burdens and to increase his vitality and vigour.

Today however a good deal of science is controlled by politicians. For too much scientific research is governed by

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

political considerations. The politicians buy a number of scientists who then become their slaves. These so-called scientists do not deserve the name; a true scientist would not put up with this kind of slavery. Science has expanded, no doubt, but the scientific attitude is still lacking to a large extent; life in general has not become scientific.

Science is a two-edged tool; it can develop or destroy, serve men or kill them. The same fire will cook our food or will burn the house down; and science itself cannot decide whether the fire shall be used for the oven or for the arson—that is the province of self-knowledge or wisdom.

Man, like a bird, has two wings—science and spiritual wisdom—and the needs both together for his happiness. The design of every machine provides for two forces, one to generate energy for movement and the other to guide and control it. One cannot work without the other. A car has an engine and a steering wheel, so does a human being. We walk with our feet and not with our eyes, but the eyes show us where to go. Self-knowledge or wisdom is the eye, science is the feet. With no eyes, man would not know where he is going; with no feet, he would be able to look about him but would have to sit still at home. Nothing can be done in this world without science, but science cannot go in the right direction without self-knowledge.

* * *

India is an ancient land with her own distinctive character. She has never in her history attacked any other country; even in the days of her greatest rulers, when learning and art flourished and she was at the height of her prosperity, there is no record that she ever committed aggression. The Indian travellers who took the road to China, Japan, Burma, Indo-China, Ceylon, Tibet and Central Asia carried a message of learning and the good life; they carried no arms and were backed by no political power. They went only to spread the light of knowledge. Moreover, as India did not impose her rule on other lands, neither did she impose her ideas. She was content merely to expound them. This has been the distinctive feature of India's history and it is one of which we may be proud.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In India the teaching of the good life has not been linked exclusively with the name of any individual. It is good that we have not identified our way of life with the teaching of any one great man, nor tied down our thinking to his ideas. The Indian people have always enjoyed freedom of thought. Indian philosophy never quarrelled with science. There is nothing in the *Vedas* which contradicts the facts of perceptual experience recorded by science. Students of history know that in Europe there was a raging controversy between science and theology. The scientists were obliged to oppose the theologians, and the theologians persecuted the scientists. But in India there was no such conflict between science and religion. The greatest philosopher of our land, Shankaracharaya, said : "Knowledge is not subject to men, but to objective reality"—in other words, no man can have any authority over the natural order of the universe.

Shankaracharya has thus, as it were, given science its "Magna Carta." Science can come out into the open, religion has no quarrel with it. Today also, India has a great opportunity to show that her spiritual traditions have a place for science and welcome it.

At present, unfortunately, India is weak in science and we must learn from the western peoples, as we have every right to do. As we learn, let us also learn to use science in non-violent ways. This is India's special task in the age of science in which we live, and Europe and America are looking to India to show them how to move in this direction. First, we must resolve that all our human problems shall be solved by ethical and non-violent methods, that our villages shall be truly free to manage their own affairs in peace, and that we shall all live together in mutual good-will and without conflict. Secondly, we must determine to use science as a tool of service not as a weapon of destruction, to increase our harvests not our armaments. Thirdly, we must decide on the merits of each case whether to use our scientific knowhow to build large-scale or small-scale machines. If we keep these points in mind science will serve us well.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Science and scientific technology are to be differentiated. It is not science but spiritual wisdom which must decide how far scientific technology should be applied in practice, in a particular society at a particular time. There should be no restrictions on the advance of pure science; the more it progresses the better. But its use and application should be directed by self-knowledge. Science, as such, is indifferent to ethical considerations and its effects will be good or evil according to the guidance it receives.

2. Self-Knowledge

For many different reasons, the human race has become divided up into many groupings, large and small. But there is one division about which there can be no dispute; each one of us is in a body, and our body separates us from all other bodies.

If I fall ill, I alone experience the illness. Another man may imagine my troubles and even suffer with me, but only mentally; he cannot feel my bodily aches and pains. Neither can he reap the benefit of the sound sleep that I enjoyed last night. Our bodies are separate, apart, and they are a fruitful source of our divisions.

Because each one of us is bound to a body, we feel bound also to those with whom we have some bodily relationship, fathers and mothers, wives and children. Around our bodies we build up a further circle of relatives and friends. The caste into which I am born is mine too; I associate with it and keep other castes at a distance. This is the basic reason for all those divisions of caste, creed, language, province, nation etc. by which the world is broken into fragments. I put myself into a group in other words I put what is "mine" on one side and the rest of the world on the other. Then I go on enlarging "my" circle. Of course, if I end by including the whole world in my circle, well and good. But as things stand, "I" am a human being, so I exclude animals, birds etc. from "my" group; "I" am an Indian and so exclude other nations and peoples. And so it goes on.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Who am "I"? The ancient sages answered: "I am Brahma"—that is, all-inclusive, cattle and donkeys and all. This experience of the unity of life is termed *Vedanta*. It means that I must try to treat all beings with equal respect. I shall try certainly to do this, but I shall not wholly succeed because of my body. The desire will be there, but the body will pull the other way. This idea that equal honour is due to all is the basis of *ahimsa*, non-violence.

Ahimsa is a way of living, *Vedanta* is a way of thinking. *Vedanta*, thinking, tells us what is; *ahimsa*, conduct, tell us how to act. Each complements the other. *Vedanta* is the basis for the practice of life; *ahimsa* is the house built on that foundation. Our task in the villages is to explain to the people that we are all one and that we must try to practise this equality in our daily living.

How then shall we understand this idea, *I am Brahma*, and realise its meaning? Well, I have ears, eyes, and nose; I have a mind, sense, and an intellect. And "I" am one who recognises these faculties, I am the "witness" who observes them all. Suppose my watch loses two minutes a day; I know it and set it right. I am the witness of my watch. In the same way I can observe my own mind, try to correct its shortcomings and make good use of it. This "I" who recognises all this is other than the mind. By following out this line of thought we can reach the truth that I am the witness, knowing myself as other than my senses, my consciousness, my intellect; knowing myself as I am in myself. This is the method of the *vedanta*, to think of the self as the "witness".

The search for equality is the aim of the *vedanta* as it is of *ahimsa*. How shall we begin to practise this idea of equality? Well, what do we do when one of our sense organs is defective—like my own ears, for example? Do we not give our first attention to the weak and defective organ? In the same way, when we work in the villages, we must first of all do all we can to help those who are in the most pitiable condition. This is the secret of non-violence.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In India we have come to accept a very low standard of what we expect from "Self-knowledge." We think it should make a man calm and contented in all circumstances, in illusion and delusion, good and evil, free from concern for the welfare or suffering of the world outside. If one asks how a man can be at peace amid so much suffering, the reply is that this suffering is illusion, merely the "play" of the Lord.

Our people seem to think that "liberation" can be had merely by stretching out a hand for it. A man has been writing to me, saying something like this : "How far you have sunk into illusion and pride! Do you imagine that the world can be saved your way? Why don't you give it up?" I had met this man's *guru* several years earlier; she was a woman who lived a peaceful, simple life. His letter urged me to go and sit at her feet; he looked on her as a divine being. In my reply I asked what I should do there. He answered : "How can you ask? The very question shows your ignorance and pride. What is there to *do*? Simply come and sit here, and supreme peace will be yours". This is how our people think of "liberation"—as something easily within one's grasp; they assure one that they have attanied "self-knowledge". Gandhiji alone used to declare to the end of his life that he had not yet attained it. Real self-knowledge, like full scientific knowledge, is an endless quest, an unattainable goal. Just as science aspires to sovereignty over the whole physical universe, so should we aspire to lordship over all the powers of the spirit.

My study of religious literature leads me to conclude that so far the human race has had only the merest glimpse of the nature of self-knowledge. When a man gets stung by a scorpion we may perhaps feel a little sorry for him, nothing more. If we had real knowledge of the Self, of the truth that "he and I are one", we ought ourselves to feel his pain, alternatively, if we remain cool and cheerful, the man who was stung ought himself to experience the same calm cheerfulness. One of these two things ought to happen, either our bodies should feel the sting of the scorpion, or our feelings of bodily comfort and peace should

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

enter into the man who was stung. We men have certainly not reached such full self-knowledge; we can only feel a little pity.

Superficial forms of unity will achieve nothing so long as we do not have the inward experience that in spite of all diversities of appearance we are all one. We "Gandhians" observe a form of prayer, and we keep on improving this form. It is not without it uses, but we do not seem to experience the melting of the heart in devotion which is the inner reality of prayer. We undertake programmes of service for the sick and others in need. They are good programmes, but are limited and rigid. Our institutions do not appear to have any life and spirit in them—only superficial techniques. Nai Talim, for example; there is discussion of its content and so on, but the real heart of it, the experience of work and knowledge as one, is not there.

Certain of Gandhiji's teachings are on the purely spiritual plane. To the five traditional principles of *ahimsa satya* etc., he added others which constitute our "eleven vows". Gandhiji did not invent this spiritual tool, but he was the first to declare vows to be necessary for social service. Before his day they had been considered necessary for spiritual growth, for *yogis* and *sadhaks*. We find references to them in this context in Patanjali and others; and they have been practised by saints throughout the world. But it was only in Gandhiji's *asharm* that I was first introduced to the idea that without the discipline of these pledges social service is not possible. Gandhiji set before us as our aim the non-violent service of all mankind, and of humanity in India as a part of mankind, he set before us the eleven vows as the means of fulfilling this aim, and the various aspects of the *asharm's* daily work and activities. He thus put forward a complete programme of national service through agriculture, *khadi* etc,, which included the eleven vows as the *sadhak's* articles of faith, and which was part and parcel of our service of mankind.

Great souls of all times have experienced spiritual doubts and questionings and have been impelled to seek for answers that would satisfy their souls. Jesus, the impact of whose thought

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

is now felt throughout the world, spent his short life of thirty three years in a country scarcely larger than three Indian administrative districts, and only the three final years in public teaching. No one knows how his first thirty years were spent. It is said that he worked as a carpenter. But except that he fasted, and had an encounter with Satan, we know nothing of his spiritual strivings. Yet he must have known fundamental spiritual questionings and reached his own solutions before he began his public work. He could not have spoken those mighty words "Love thine enemy" without personal experience. We all know also that the Lord Buddha walked and taught in twelve or fourteen districts of Bihar and U.P., saying that there should be no violence, no slaughter of animals for religious offerings. But we know nothing of his own spiritual disciplines, of his search for truth in pilgrimage or in meditation, of how he came to preach *maitri* (friendship) and *karuna* (compassion) as the words of world salvation.

In Gandhiji's autobiography we do get some glimpses of his spiritual pilgrimage, for example in his discussions with Raychandbhai. He certainly knew spiritual questionings and he began his work only when his "mystic experience" had enabled him for service. He used to say that "Truth is God." People imagine that this is a scientific statement, but it is not merely scientific.

These great souls saw and taught truth which we, with our limited spiritual insight, have failed to understand and interpret correctly. Most people think that the last word has been said on these matters and that there is no room for further progress—that India has inherited a complete and final philosophy of the Spirit from the *Vedanta* and the experiences of her Saints. This attitude is in complete contrast to that of the scientists, who say that their knowledge is very far form complete and that what we have discovered so far is a mere drop in the ocean. Even though Sputniks have been launched into space, even though man has realised his dream of landing on the moon, and has discovered now sources of physical energy, the scientists still

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

declare that the knowledge men have so far attained, is the merest trifle compared with the vast discoveries which lie ahead.

Science therefore is continually undertaking new research and will always go on doing so. There ought to be similar new researches in the realm of spiritual truth, for what we know today is an infinitesimal part of an infinite whole. It is a mistake to rest content with repeating and interpreting the ancient writings. A science which does not go forward to new discoveries is going backward, and that is what is happening to spiritual science in India today. The physical sciences make mistakes from time to time, but these are corrected by experience. At one time scientists believed that the sun goes round the earth, but they later realised their mistake and corrected it. This readiness to correct one's mistakes is essential. In spiritual sciences also apart from the need to seek new spiritual truth, we must admit that we have committed a grave error in assumning that we have nothing more to learn; because of this error, our great sages have not had the influence they should have had on the life of our society.

Mistakes due to our narrowness of outlook have distorted our economic life. Man seems unable to think beyond "my," my house, my friends, my fields, my wealth, my family's happiness, my country's welfare. The result is that one man's prosperity blocks another's way, that when I become rich another is made poor, and that his success threatens me with ruin. This kind of economics is a breeding ground of hostility. It is this economic system which makes the "developed" nations wealthy at the expense of the rest of the world.

The same narrow individualism which distorts our economics is to be found also in our thinking about spiritual matters. The mistaken economic ideas which make me consider only "my" interests and "my" prosperity, isolate me from other people. The same selfish individualism in spiritual things shows itself in a phrase like "my" salvation. People realised this long ago. Prahlad put it very clearly in his prayers to the Lord. "Many *devas* and sages," he said, "desire to see their own salvation,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and do long penances in jungle solitudes in order to obtain it. But I have no desire to find my salvation alone. I cannot abandon these poor people". Prahlad's attitude is as relevant today as it was then. We have taken no steps to correct our mistake. "My liberation" is a contradiction in terms. So long as "my" remains there *can* be no spiritual liberation. If I seek only my own enlightenment, and am content that everyone else should remain in darkness, I am throwing away with my own hands all hope of liberation. We have still not realised that "my" can never lead us into freedom but only into slavery.

Our spiritual *gurus* have always urged us to rid ourselves of our bondage to "I" and "me", but they have paid little attention to what this means in practice. There is a riddle in the *Mahabharata*: "What word is bound in two syllables and released in three ?" The answer is *mama* (mine) and *namama* (not-mine). In short, unless one gets rid of the ego, freedom is impossible. Yet even in this spiritual field our practices may strengthen the ego. A man may discipline himself through austerity and thus achieve certain esoteric powers—and yet be as self-centred in spirit as another man who goes after money. One man aspires to wealth, and expends all his thought and energy in order to become a millionaire copitalist. The other man, the "spiritual aspirant", becomes a sort of spiritual capitalist. People seek his blessing, and feel convinced that his blessing has given their children happiness and brought their family prosperity. Both the aspirant and his devotees are basically selfish in their outlook; consequently our society also grows selfish.

In India, then, even our spiritual disciplines have become tainted with a subtle kind of selfishness and are not truly spiritual at all. It is true that they are on a somewhat higher level than money making, but they are essentially of the same kind. Outwardly they appear very different, but there is no difference in the inward spirit. Both are individualistic, both promote egoism and possessiveness.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Can it be said with any certainty that national leaders reach a high level from the spiritual standpoint? They may be as narrow-minded as any small farmer who does his best to grab a bit of land from his neighbour's field. When a national leader begins to think of extending his country's boundaries by getting his hands on another nation's oilbearing districts, are his aims derived from spiritual insight? The politician is as selfish as the farmer, though he may cut a bigger figure. But "ten-twentieths" is of no more value than "one-half", even though it looks bigger.

One of the greatest defects in Indian spirituality is that we have paid no attention to *how* to get rid of this "I", this egoism. The secret is to let "we" drive out "I". ideally, perhaps, it is "thou"—the presence of God—that should drive out "I". But where is God to be found? Let us rather say that "I" should be absorbed into "we". Only when we can think and speak of *our* spiritual striving, *our* devotion, will our work find its natural fulfilment, and Individual and society be regenerated together.

Since childhood I have been in the habit of reading whatever spiritual literature came my way. There was one magazine, *The Review of Reviews*, whose editor was interested in spiritualism, which is more concerned with life after death than with this present life. This magazine used to publish accounts of communication with the spirits of the dead by the great scientist Sir Oliver Lodge. As the work of a scientist these descriptions had to be given due weight' they could not be brushed aside as illusory or baseless. But they did not attract me, for they were not concerned with the truly spiritual. Spiritualism struck me as being a method of investigating the other world, parallel to the physical scientist's study of world. Neither was concerned with the inner life of man.

Real spiritual insight is rooted in faith and this faith has five aspects which we should consider.

The first aspect is the need for faith in absolute ethical values for the whole of life. There is everything too be gained by

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

affirming such values, and everything to be lost by denying them. But they are a matter of faith, for there has never been a time when the human mind has accepted them in practice. In some places violence has been considered inevitable; in others absolute ethical values have been recognised, but men have felt obliged to make many exceptions; it is not possible to give a logical reason for believing that a man who is steadfast for truth even at the cost of life itself is, in fact, victorious. This can only be a matter of faith.

The second article of faith is in the unity and sanctity of life. It is impossible to put this into practice. We kill living things for our food, we injure innumerable others, and in our ordinary behaviour we distinguish between higher and lower. But in spite of all this, we need to hold on to the faith that life is one and life is sacred.

The third article of spiritual faith is in the continuity of life after death. Life does not end with death, but the nature of the ongoing life is a mystery beyond our comprehension. Men make many speculations—is it material or immaterial, shapely or formless, embodied or disembodied? The belief that life persists in some form or other is a matter of faith. The intellect may take us a certain distance, beyond that we depend on faith. Without faith, a man can grasp only what his reason accepts.

The fourth article is faith in the fruits of action. We do not know when life entered the world, nor when it will come to an end. But life poses a number of insoluble problems if we think of ourselves as existing in this birth only. If our being is thought of as having neither beginning nor end, many of these problems are susceptible to reason. The concept of the fruits of action would wither into insignificance if we have no past or future beyond this life.

It is divine law that the fruit of evil action should be evil and that of good action should be good. This is God's plan for our education : "as you sowed, so shall you reap." If you sow thorns you have to reap thorns, not mangoes. Our common interpretations of this law of *karma* however are full of mistakes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I must certainly reap the fruit of my action; if not now, during another birth; for the low of *k rma* cannot broken. But this does not mean that I alone shall reap the fruit of my action and that you alone will reap the fruit of yours. The fruits of some actions are individual, but others are shared in common. When one member of a family of five does wrong, the evil fruit of his action is suffered by the other four also.

No action is completed, remember, without experience of its fruit. But the law of cause and effect must not be applied rigidly. The Lord if He so wills can release man from it—the principle of *karma* is not soulless punishment : "the Lord chastises those whom He loves". God desires in love to set you right, and in some cases He may set aside His law. The law may condemn a man to death, but the President has power to pardon. We must experience the fruit of our evil actions, but if God wills He may reduce our sufferings. Like the individual, society also has to experience the fruit of its actions, and like the individual it may find its sentence reduced

The fifth article of faith is the belief hat the universe is ordered an intelligent purpose. We may call it God but if God does not care about being given a name, neither do I. Our faith is in the existence of a directing purpose above and beyond the little plans that you and I make and carry out. We do not know what part we are playing in the overall plan of creation, we see only our own little concern. That the Creator has made us for a larger purpose, that there is an intelligent order in the universe in which we have our part—this a is matter of faith.

3. Self-Knowledge and Science

In the world of the future, science and spiritual wisdom will have a place; power politics and sectarian religion will have none. Parties, power struggles and nationalistic interests are domed, though they will give a lot of trouble before we are rid of them. Nevertheless they will have to go,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

because they cannot endure the light of science. Science has made the whole world one neighbourhood and linked it with other planets. In this new setting the old ideas must go. For one thing, politics must go; for another, the small divided religious sects. Many ancient forms of worship now serve only to restrict the heart's sympathies and to divide man from man. All these narrow traditional forms must come to an end, and the soul wisdom which is the essence of religion must take their place. This soul wisdom or self-knowledge will endure, along with science, and the cause of human unity will be furthered.

In this age of science political and legal systems have lost their value. If these systems continue to divide mankind and increase tension, humanity is domed. The party politicians are not prepared to admit this, of course, but the truth is that modern weapons are so destructive that unless we can control our quarrels, the end of the world may well be in sight. Sensible men should disregard legalism and settle their problems on spiritual principles. Today we need the kind of political system which will unite men and bring them together; up to now our systems have contributed to our mutual estrangement. Why should we continue to cling to them?

Today there are parties everywhere, and new ones are continually being formed. But such parties can accomplish nothing useful. What we need is an independent group devoted to disinterested public service, which will strengthen village life by promoting unity. Power should be decentralised and all energies should be directed towards spiritual development. Problems should be solved by discussion in such a way that dissension is avoided.

Members of political parties often have a sincere desire to be of service, but they cannot realise their aims, for if one party starts a useful programme the opposition tends to look upon it with suspicion and put obstacles in its way. The result is that no one can do anything. The Government, may be, does a little; but Government programmes do not

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

help the people to use their own strength, and that is a grave defect.

The political system that we adopted from the west has encouraged divisions. There were factions and quarrels among us before, but this western system has made things much worse and exacerbated the divisions of religion, language and caste which already existed. Ambitious men in every party from their own groups, and so does every minister, and group within groups. How can the country grow strong is such conditions?

As soon as Ayub Khan assumed power in Pakistan he put an end to all political parties. A political system can do nothing against a modern mechanised army. The man who controls such an army can usurp all political power. In future only those who follow the path of spiritual wisdom will be able to wrest the sword from such a man's hands. And for this they will not need to take the sword, because they will rule in the minds and hearts of those who wield the sword. In the end the very men who wield the sword today will themselves return their weapons to the factories to be converted into plougshares.

During my travels around India it has been my happy fate to have opportunities to meet soldiers. I was able to ment them because I am not in politics. I spoke to them about spiritual principles and they appreciated what I said, and although the politicians certainly seem to have the upper hand today, I have not lost hope; I know that the future is mine and not theirs. Only those who stand aloof from politics and rely upon spiritual principles will have a place in the world of science, and it is they who will show mankind it true path.

At present, however, there is little sign of the new society. Are we ruled by the same old men with the same old attitudes, or is there any change? Are any new values being built up? If the antwers is no, if the same disputes and petty squabbles continue, what is the use of changes in externals, in housing or agriculture or communications? Even floods and earthquakes can bring about physical changes. But if the mind and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu.
Acc. No. 6435
Dated 1/6/...
Gandhi Memorial College of Education Bantalab Jammu

heart of man do not change; all that will happen is that, thanks to science, the small-scale feuds of previous ages will be fought out on a larger scale. There can be no real revolution in the life of man without a change of heart and a change of outlook. These changes can only take place when men's hearts are transformed by love.

As I have said, the Government may do something for the people. The question is, what do the people do for themselves? Have they begun to get rid of landlordism? Do they work together anything or think and plan together? If so, the new humanity is born. If not, there may be a new world, but there will be no new men. For Governments may change the environment but they cannot change the man. Only those who know the power of the Spirit can bring the new humanity to birth, for only the power of the Spirit can change the inner man. My own small efforts are directed to this end, to the increase of our spiritual strength.

Every human being has his own powers, and some agency is needed to weld these powers together. Political systems cannot do it, sectarian religions cannot do it only spiritual power is able to make men one. I am using the word "religion" here in its institutional sense; there my be fifty "religions", but there is only one spiritual power. Political systems and bonds of languages, like religions, bring groups of men together but at the same time divide them from other groups. But spiritual wisdom has the power to unite all humanity.

4. A Collective Spiritual Disicipline

Science today impels us to move forward from the individual spiritual discipline of the ancient sages to a collective spiritual discipline, because unless society as a whole can achieve spiritual insight, science can be of no help to humanity but will bring about its ruin. The sages and the *Vedanta* used to say : "This house, this field, this body, is not mine." Today we have to add to their words and say. "This house this field, this wealth

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

is not mine; *its belongs to all.*" This is absolutely essential, for the scientific age offers us only two alternatives, all or none, complete unity or complete annihilation. We must choose—either to bring heaven to earth, or to bring earth to ruin and perish with it.

The times demand that we offer to humanity our all, as we would to a God. And just as we symbolise our offering of ourselves in a dramatic act of worship, so we declare our commitment to humanity in the dramatic symbolism of *gramdan.* I am often asked whether the people of *gramdani* villages have *really* given up their possessiveness in respect of the land, whether they have *really* risen to such renunciation, whether they *really* treat all the village chiidren as their own? Could such a miracle come about so soon? I tell these questioners that the *gramdan* resolution is a dramatic act symbolic of hope and aspiration for spiritual revolution. The drama is a necessary step; little by little science itself will turn the symbol into a reality.

You remember how it is told of Sri Ramanuja that he braved the penalties of hell in order to preach through the length and breadth of the land the spiritual truths which he had received from his *guru.* For it was the law in those days that spiritual learning should be kept secret. One cannot say that this was wholly wrong; at that time there was some value in secrecy. But there was also truth in the impulse to share the treasure, and Jnandev, Chaitanya and Ramanuja shared it with the common people wherever they went, so that even women and little children could understand. I was commonly said that Chaitanya was an *avatar* of Lord Krishna, bringing his love to man in human form. We have to develop and expand this religion of love which the saints revealed. The limitations of the old days no longer exist, and we must go forward. Our task is to understand the essential truths of their message, and clothe them in forms suited to our own times.

In this way the old concept of *bhakti* should be reinterpreted as *sarvodaya.* Formely the experience of oneness with all living

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

beings would come to some solitary sage in his ecstasy, and he would see all differences as unreal, as things to be overcome. This experience of unity must become, in our day, the common property of mankind. Not only the sage, but the man in the street must learn, as an elementary spiritual truth, that all beings are equally to be honoured.

The idea of salvation too must be reinterpreted. Salvation is not a think to be sought for oneself. When self comes in at the door salvation flies out of the window. There is no such thing as "my" salvation. "My" must go if salvation is to come. This is something for all of us to ponder; it will revolutionise our lives and put an end to our economic and social divisions.

In medieval times great devotees like Tulsi, Shankardev and Tukaram reflected on the meaning of "liberation". They saw that it does not mean freedom for the body, but freedom from egoism. Having realised the truth, they devoted themselves to serving and teaching the people. The disciples of Sri Ramakrishna take as their motto : "for the good of the soul and the happiness of the world." The words are worth nothing. They do not aim at happiness for themselves; the phrase is the soul's *good* and *world's* happiness.

Perhaps the idea seems somewhat ambiguous. If we are to think of our own good, why not also of the good of society? I reply, because we cannot force a man to take what is "good" for him against his will. If I consider renunciation a "good", I shall strive to attain it for myself. But if another man seeks relief from suffering it is my duty to go to his help. The great devotees chose to turn their backs on "liberation" and live with and for the people, teaching them in a spirit of devotion. They regarded their own "good" as including the people's happiness. Thus we have moved from "liberation" to "devotion", and from "devotion" to service. The saints do not abandon the ideal of liberation, but they unite with it their devotion and their service. Seeking liberation from egoism for themselves, they seek it also for society.

* * *

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The great question today is whether man will learn to think in terms of equality, or keep his self-centred pride. We ought to give up singing *Sare Jahan se achha Hindustan hamara* (our India is best among the world's countries), and renounce the petty vanity of asserting that India is superior to other countries just because she is ours. This may be a bitter pill, but we shall have to swallow it for it is science. What we need is an attitude of equality, an attitude with no touch of pride or possessiveness, no narrowness of feeling, an attitude in harmony with science. This new attitude must prevade our whole human society or society will perish.

It is a delusion to think that we can experience God in fulness in this body and through this puny intellect. One glimpse, one fragment of such experience can give us peace of mind and the power to do our work. The fulness of that experience is for God alone, but we can enrich our own vision from the experiences of other men. One portion, a wonderful portion, of this divine vision has been given to Islam; another is to be found in Hinduism, a third in Christianity, and there are other revolutions in each religious tradition. We need to open ourselves to the spiritual treasures of all humanity.

The culture of India goes back for thousands of years. *The Vedas, Upnishads, the Gita,* the teachings of the saints, form an unbroken tradition of thought which has given India a strong sense of unity. Our people may quarrel but in their hearts they know that they are one. Guru Nanak gave striking expression to this spirit of unity.

The whole purpose of *bhoodan* and *gramdan* is in line with this tradition. It is to reunite divided hearts. The purpose of *gram-swaraj* is to transform our villages so that the things which divide men may be done, away, and there may be union of hearts.

I have described how the greatest strength that a man can possess is his faith. If you want universal peace, happiness and prosperiety, an end of suffering and hardship, you must

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

hold fast to self-knowledge, science and faith. I have no magic formula in my possession except faith in men. In the armoury of *sarvodaya* there is no greater weapon than the faith we place in our fellow men.

Faith is the most miraculous thing in the world. The whole world depends on it. Without mutual faith the human race would have perished by mutual slaughter. Even thieves keep faith with one another. If we could only believe in the power of faith, realise its potential and act on it, it would not take long to stop the world's conflicts. They are caused mainly by lack of faith, and it is this that has to be overcome. Faith is the power of this age. People have faith in me; they have no guarantee that I shall not lie to them, but they have faith that I will not and I too have faith in them. Faith is my secret, and it has great power.

This third force, this power of faith is essential for political and social planning in the age of science. Our fitness for this age depends on the strength of our faith. Yet there is a great lack of faith nowadays, especially in the field of politics. Lack of faith is counted a virtue in politics and is considered a sign of prudence. In my opinion, the moment of imprudence has been reached as soon as the slightest doubt creeps into the mind. Without complete faith politics will never work.

So I put faith alongside self-knowledge and science, and I meditate much on these three principles. I have composed a sanskrit *sloka* which I repeat daily. It says that Vedanta, science and Faith are the three powers which by their operation can give the world the peace it to sorely needs.

* * *

Sarvodaya work is based on two principles, non-violence and co-operation. The non-violent approach is based on the experience of the unity of the soul. It is a spiritual idea. The principle of cooperation is based on science. *Sarvodaya* therefore unites the spiritual and scientific principles, and its thought is a blend of the spiritual and the scientific also. Some people accuse *Sarvodaya* of being retrograde; they say that it has no use for scientific discoveries, that it prefers the *charkha*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to the spinning mill and the *takli* to the *charkha*, and that if a man were to regress even further and spin yarn with his bare hands, it would like that best of all! No one challenges its spiritual dimension, but they certainly have grave doubts about its scientific dimension. But the fact is that *sarvodaya* integrates the spiritual and the scientific into an indivisible whole.

Without science, what would a non-violent spiritual order be like? The Chinese sage Lao Tse has described one. His ideal village is self-sufficient in goods; it has no need of imports from outside. The villagers live contentedly within their own society but at night they hear dogs barking in the distance and conclude that other villages must exist. This is non-violence without science. When we talk about *sarvodaya* the leaders of our nation tend to think that we want to follow Lao Tse's pattern.

Without the spiritual principles of non-violence, what would a scientifically planned order be like? We can find an example in Russia. They have consolidated all the agricultural land. They didn't ask anyone's consent, nor did they consult the bullocks. The common people have no hand in the planning. The Government makes plans, and everyone has to carry them out. The bullock's duty is to do a full day's work, and the manager's duty is to see that they get a full belly of food. There is food and clothing for all and no lack of physical necessities. But no one wants your advice and you have no freedom to try out your own ideas.

These two patterns Lao Tse's and Stalin's are respectively patterns of non-violence and of co-operation. In *Sarvodaya*, the two are integrated, the social pattern is both non-violent and co-operative.

What is our first duty? The other day a man came to visit me at Pavnar and greeted me with *Jai Hind*. I responded "Jai Hind, Jai Jagat, Jai Hari," I showed him that loyalty to India could have its dangers without loyalty to all mankind, and that ultimately our supreme loyalty is to God. First and foremost

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

we are men, and only secondly we are Indians, and after that we are inhabitants of one region, one house and one body !

This is a matter for education. I used to work as a teacher in the *ashram* school which is in Wardha district. But I didn't begin by teaching the children about Wardha or Maharashtra. I told them that we are all inhabitants of the earth, citizens of the wide world. Over our heads in the night sky shines the heavenly Ganges, the Milky Way; and our sun is just one star among the millions of stars in that night sky, very tiny comparad with most of the others. Our world moves round the sun, carrying with it all its living creatures; scientists tell us there are more than two million species of them and no one can imagine how many individual creatures there must be. The human race is just one group among them all, and India one country in human society, in which there is a state called Maharashtra and a little district called Wardha, and in it this *ashram* with its two fields and our own little selves.

There is a passage in the *Vedas* whose recital is believed to purify from sin. It begins : "In the beginning were Law and Truth, from which sprang the Sun and Moon and the whole creation, from which sprang the stars. . ,". You may wonder what that has to do with purification from sin? The connection is that in reciting it a man has before him such a vision of the vast universe that he realises his own littleness and his pride and egoism fall away, so that he is no longer tempted to sin.

Social revolution, social regeneration, is quite different from the small piecemeal improvements that are going on today—land reclamation here, increased production there. Such things are being done everywhere. America produces a lot, possesses half the world's wealth, but has no stability, is full of unrest and fear, and has a higher rate of suicides and mental illness than almost any other country. Every one agrees that our own country needs to produce more; yes, but it also needs regeneration of the heart. The standard of living must certainly be raised; the standard of thinking must be raised too. Our sympathies must be vastly enlarged in their scope to match the vast scope of our scientific knowledge.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The fact that *gramdan* can solve the land problem is a very minor matter. The important thing is that it can raise the standard of thinking; it can make the village a united family in which God's gifts of air, water and land belong to all, where all work together, not for themselves but for the community, and all plan together, not for their own interests but for the interests of the whole village. This approach will transform our whole ethical outlook. That is why I feel such enthusiasm for it. I am no longer young but I never grow weary of this work. There is a wonderful inner joy which I cannot put into words; I feel I am tasting the nectar of the Gods and long to share it with all.

Our task is to create a new humanity. Old things have passed away, the old national boundaries must be broken down. An Australian visitor was asking me about the world significance of the land-gift movement. I replied : "It is this, Australia has a lot of spare land and Japan is short of land; you should invite the Japanese to use yours." He said, "Yes, we have plenty of land, but we want to safeguard our culture, so we would rather take in Europeans whose culture is similar to ours." I said : "This is the very attitude which our movement is out to change. Our purpose is to do away with the idea that the cultures of Japan or Australia or Europe or India ought to be kept apart, or that Hindu culture and Muslim culture are entirely separate." *Gramdan* is not a trivial local matter; it aims to revolutionise the life of man and build a new world.

ACHARYAKUL : A TEACHER'S FELLOWSHIP AND THE THIRD FORCE

Preface

On Dec. 7th and 8th 1967 Sri Karpuri Thakur, then Education Minister in Bihar, arranged for all Vice-Chancellors of Universities, heads of institutions, and prominent educationists to meet in conference with Vinoba at Pusa Road. In his address, Vinoba urged teachers to assert themselves as an independent force. "The moral leadership of the country," he said, "should be in the hands of teachers. They must show themselves capable

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

of ridding the land of its miseries—of poverty, disease, ignorance and ever-increasing violence".

Erom Pusa Road Vinoba went on to Muzaffarpur, where he met the Vice-Chancellor and the leading teachers of the Bihar University, and they discussed the recent police intervention on the University campus. "I am sorry for it," said Vinoba, "but what surprises me is that University men should think of their campus in such small and limited terms. The whole of India is the University campus, and it is a matter of shame to scholars and teachers when the police operate anywhere in it. Teachers should take a firm resolve to maintain the peace."

The teachers of Muzaffarpur responded with enthusiasm to these ideas, and drew up a form of pledge which was signed by 150 teachers. The teachers of Patna also welcomed the pledge, and when Vinoba stayed for ten days in Monghyr College, the teachers there too drew up a plan of organisation.

On 6th March 1968 Vinoba entered Bhagalpur. On the 8th he was in Kahol village near the ancient Vikramshila which is renowned as the home of Kahol Muni. There Vinoba announced the formation of *Acharyakul*, and thus carried a stage further the establishment of the principles on which the teacher's life should be built.

The Acharyakul has come into being with the following objectives :

That the moral stature and social status of teachers should be raised :

That it should be fully accepted that education should enjoy the same independence as the judiciary;

That the power of the people should be established opposed to the power of violence and distinct from that of law;

That attitudes and dispositions conducive to world peace should be fostered; and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

That teachers should be the pioneers of the non-violent revolution.

Krishnaraj Mehta

(The following four talks by Vinoba were given during some of the conferences referred to above.)

I. The Problem of Education

The ideas I am about to place before you are the outcome of a long period of serious thinking and practical experience. But I do not expect Government or society, or educationists, to accept them merely for that reason. I do not feel strongly about my ideas. If people like them and wish to put them to the test, well and good; if they do not, I shall feel no special regret. I don't want to be treated as an oracle. I want people to study my ideas thoroughly, discuss them fully, and accept whatever they find to be satisfactory. There is an ancient saying that the seer who proclaims the path of *dharma* is like a sign-post at the crossroads. The sign-post stretches out its arm to show you "That is the way to Darbhanga." It does not pick you up and carry you bodily to Darbhanga. The man of a scientific turn of mind is a sign-post. He is there to advise, explain, suggest, but not to force you to act. That is my own approach. So you need not be afraid to give me a hearing.

As you know, much scientific research has been going on in Europe and America for the last 50 years or so, from which we have certainly a lot to learn. At the same time, India also has her own stores of knowledge. Certain sciences have been studied here from ancient times. One of them is the science of education, which has been highly developed in India. I do not mean that we have nothing to learn from outside. On the contrary, as the Vedas say, "Let good thoughts come among us from the four corners of the world." We welcome all thoughts, and are not concerned whether an idea is native or foreign, old or new, but only whether it is true or false. Let us take whatever is true, even though it is old. And while there is no doubt that we can take much from outside, we must also give its proper value to what we already possess. This is all the more

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

necessary because what has developed here is suited to our own circumstances and history. Our Ayurveda deals with plants which grow in India and can thorefore be very useful in all villages. In the same way our native science of education can be very helpful to us because it is in harmony with our own nature.

Of all the books on education in Sanskrit, the crowning jewel is Patanjali's *Yoga Shastra*. It considers education from two points of view, that of the ordinary mental level and that of the supra-mental plane. It is imperative to consider education in terms o psychology. For otherwise it could never make a start. But although a knowledge of psychology is essential for the first steps in education, some knowledge of the supra-mental is also necessary in order to understand its final stage and where it may lead. Patanjali's *Yoga Shastra* deals with both aspects—how to analyse the psychological disposition and work in harmony with it, and how to go beyond this mental disposition to a higher plane. If we do not act in harmony with the psychological nature we can achieve nothing in this world. But if our thought does not go beyond this mental level, we gain no clear insight, become incapable of farsightedness, and remain imprisoned within thoughts of the immediate and trivial. The psychological and the supramental insights are both necessary. Patanjali kept them both in mind, and the *Yoga Shastra* see them out with admirable brevity. Many commentaries have been written on this text, and its thought is still alive in India.

Patanjali thinks of God as the *Guru*, the Teacher. This Supreme Spirit, he says, is the Guru of our ancient seers. In all my reading I have not found any other book of religion or psychology which refers to Him as *Guru*. He is called "Father of the Universe", or "Father" as in Christianity, or "Mother". But in the *Yoga Shastra* he is regarded as *Guru*. This is a significant thing for all of you teachers present here. He is the Teacher, the Supreme Teacher, who teaches us all. We, on our part, should imitate Him in our methods of learning and teaching. This *Guru* teaches us with the purest detachment of spirit;

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

he is in the highest sense disinterested; he imposes nothing on his pupils.

But now-a-days what is happening is that governments, both in our country and elsewhere, are doing their utmost to keep students under their thumb and impose upon them the ideas upon which the governments themselves are based. If the Government is communist, communist ideas are instilled. Even history takes new forms. In Stalin's time one version of history was current in Russia. Whe Stalin fell, the teaching of history was suspended for a few months and then a new version was writtten in which not Stalin, but some other, was installed as God; this new version was then taught in schools. You may think that history is what has really happened and that it cannot be re-made. But history is no longer what has really happened, it is what we wish to remember. We keep what we like, cut out what we dislike, and teach this kind of history to our pupils. If Fascism were to take over, they would all be taught Fascism. Each and every government tries to mould the minds of students according to its own brand of thought.

This is, in sober truth, a great danger to democracy. "One man, one vote", says democracy. Yes, but—if you give the right to vote, you must give the freedom to think. Without that, what you give with one hand, you take away with the other. This is a great danger in all countries including our own. And you, as teachers, need to aware of it.

II. A Peaceful Educational Revolution

This assembly seems to me to be of profound importance. I feel as though God is calling those who are present to undertake this work and to bring about a peaceful revolution in education. I see the hand of God, His leading and His command, in the fact that prominent men from all the Bihar Universities are gathered here and are considering together the problems of teachers and students. I believe that I am called to given all the help I can. I feel the same inner divine compulsion to take up this task, of peaceful revolution in education, as

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I previously felt to undertake the work of *bhoodan* and *gramdan*.

I believe that the work of land-sharing is of the greatest and most fundamental importance; yet I feel myself personally more fitted for this task in enducation which is before you, because I am a life-long and habitual student. Not a day passes without my giving some time to study. When I began to consider my whole way of life, and the teachings and guidance which I have received both in my inner consciousness and from the messages of the sages, there came to my mind the passage in the Upanishads which summarises the whole duty of man thus :

1. Follow truth, also study and teach.
2. Maintain serenity, also study and teach.
3. Master the senses, also study and teach.
4. Give service to guests, also study and teach.

Study and teaching are linked with every duty; every duty of man is to be permeated with the atmosphere of study and of exposition.

I went on to think that in my case the precepts should be these : Ask for land-gifts, study and teach; work for *gramdan*, study and teach; form *shanti-sena*, study and teach; make *khadi* village-centred, study and teach. That is the principle I have tried to follow, and my study and teaching has never been divorced from my work. I am very grateful to the great souls who taught me this.

I remember also the political leaders of our independence movement, those who inspired me. The greatest of them were genuine students. Our present political leaders find no time for study, they have the title of *mantri*, which means "one who reflects"; but nowadays there is no place in their lives for reflection. Our former leaders however, were different. Take Sri Aurobindo, for example—a great political leader, a revolutionary thinker; a devoted scholar. He has written twentyfive or thirty philosophical works. Take Lokamanya Tilak, immersed all day

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

long in politics, but devoting himself every night, before he slept, to an hour's study of the Vedas. In jail he wrote a commentary on the Vedas and one on the Gita, *Gita Rahasya.* He was a politician, but his heart was in study and teaching. Take Sri Ranade, one of the founders of the Congress—a regular student of modern science, economics and sociology, and also of the writings of the saints. Take Dr. Annie Besant, whose Home Rule movement shook the British Raj; she too was a scholar and wrote some twenty books on spiritual subjects. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was a great and versatile man of learning, even more distinguished in scholarship than in politics. These few examples will show you that our former political leaders were not emptyheaded, they had well-filled minds. "Empty vessels make most noise", we say. These men made little noise, but they had a great influence. I am speaking now of the politicians, not of the men who were primarily students, men like Dr. Bhagavan Das, Bhandarkar or Rabindranath Tagore. I am saying that even the politicians were also students, and that it is these men who have moulded my mind.

These thoughts have made me eager to assist you in the task of bringing about a peaceful revolution in education in Bihar. How to do it? That is what we have to consider and discuss. I have shared with you my own heart-felt aspirations; we should now make full use of the opportunity this assembly affords us, and I am at your disposal whenever you wish to consult me.

I said a little while ago that I consider myself specially fitted for this educational work, and you may very well ask me why, if that is the case, I did not take it up sooner, instead of occupying myself with *Bhoodan* and *Gramdan.* One answer would be that I felt no confidence that the experts would co-operate with me. We must realise that if two scholars were to meet and find themselves to be both of o e mind, it would be a very remarkable event! Learned men never agree, as Tulsidas found long ago.

A second reason for not undertaking this work is that I have been pre-occupied with the need for compassion.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Shankaracharya has probably never been surpassed as a teacher and a philosopher, but his prayer was : "Oh, Lord, take away my pride and increase my compassion." He was a devotee of knowledge, yet he declared that man's first duty of compassion, that compassion must grow and spread. There is a notion that this prince of *gurus*, Shankracharya, was a hard man; on the contrary, his disciple describes him as "a storehouse of all the scriptures, an abode of learning, a dwelling-place of compassion". Without compassion he could never have travelled as he did over the length and breadth of India, devoting himself to the instruction of the people.

Gautama the Buddha was a prince accomplished in many branches of knowledge, but he left his home in the name of compassion, not in the name of learning. And so he made his mark on India, he brought about a revolution in ideas; he is still a living influence in the country, and his thought is of the greatest relevance today. Our greatest scholars and men of learning have set the highest value not on knowledge alone but on knowledge united with compassion."

I have no special claim to learning, and I get a reputation for being learned only because people on the whole are so unlearned. If I were to leave my work of compassion and claim a place among the learned, they would ignore me. I have travelled throughout India on foot, and I have seen with my own eyes most grievous want and poverty. No food to eat, no clothes to wear, no roof on the house, no milk for the children, no right even to the land on which the hut is built, no medical help, let alone education. The Government has tried to set things right by means of its five-years plans, but things have not been righted.

I have had the opportunity of talking with the authors of the five-year plan. I asked what the plans were doing for the very poorest. It is good that there should be a higher average standard of living in the country, but what difference will it make in the poor man's standard of living? They told me that an all-round improvement would bring about improve-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ment of the poorest also. I call this their "theory of percolation"; a lot of rain falls upon the surface, and some of the water goes into the soil. But in some parts of the land there is rock below the surface and not a drop can percolate. There is a lot of this rock in the Indian soil, such as caste rigidity and inequalities of wealth, so that even if the average income increases, the poor still get nothing; the people on top get all the benefit and the lower layers are cheated of their share.

I have drawn our planners' attention to this a number of times, but they are eager to bring India as quickly as possible into line with the "progressive" countries of the world, and so they draw up imposing long-term plans which bring no immediate benefit. I asked when the people would get their minimum needs. "By 1985", they said, "for the lowest income group". It is not a question of maximum, but of minimum, of the barest necessities for keeping body and soul together. When are they to get that?—in 1985. Tukaram, the great saint of Maharashtra, used a parable which I repeated to our planners. A man is drowing in a river. Another calls to him, "All right, we shall arrange to rescue you the day after tomorrrow." But life-saving brooks of no delay. If it were a matter of additional comfort or convenience, one could understand that it might have to be put off until tomorrow or the day after. But to tell a drowing man that you will come to his aid the day after tomorrow? Wonderful! I cannot imagine what is going to happen by 1985; I am afraid to think what state the country may be in by then.

The Indian people have endured a great deal. I am ill-fitted to help them. I have not the physical strength to encourage them by working with them in their daily labour. But in spite of my limitations, I have been giving my time to their needs because they are so urgent, and even now I must still put them first. And yet I am conscious of the finger of God in this meeting, and it gives me hope and confidence that if we all work together, we may be able to bring about a peaceful revolution in education, at least in Bihar.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025,Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

You must not pursue knowledge in isolation. I repeat, knowledge is of no value without compassion. I expect your fullest help, therefore, in this work of compassion which I have undertaken. Practically every village has a teacher, and the teachers can achieve a very great deal if they will take the lead in organising the *gram-sabha*, giving it some guidance, explaining the basic ideas, and showing people how to express the spirit of love and goodwill in a practical ways. We must recognise that India has been shaped by its teachers. Someone once told me that modern Germany has been built up its teachers; it is certainly not less true that India has been built up, and her ideals of life, ethical, religious, economic and social, formed in their entirely by the thought and labour of her many teachers. This is the inner truth of Indian history.

If, therefore, you will consider this *gramdan* movement as your own, and devote some of your holiday time to it along with your students, you will not only be able accomplish a great work for Bihar, but you will also experience a deep satisfaction of spirit. And surely contentment of spirit is the greatest possession in the world. When my dying day arrives and I stand before the Lord, I would like to be able to rejoice in what I have done. He has given me this body to be used in the service of the needy. I believe that a life of service is the key to inner joy, and I seek full support in this work, I want teachers as a body to plunge into it along with me.

The task of *Bihar dan* has nothing to do with party politics, so you need have no hesitation about it. You have plenty of leisure too; God made a year of 365 days, but I understand the Universities have reduced it to 180. God made a twenty-four hour day, they make a three-hour day. So I think you have time to give even though I agree that some of it must be spent in study. I know, however, from my own experience that both study and writing can be carried on while travelling in villages—you might call them by-products of my factory. And I believe that the next generation will find these by-products quite useful. In short, I recognise that you must give time to study, but along with it you ought also to help with *gramdan*. That means

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

you must be above politics. I do not mean that you should not study them—politics is a proper subject of study. But your chief interest should be in *Jai Jagat* that is, in the kind of politics which can benefit the world as a whole. You should give all your mind to that. Keep clear of power-politics, let it be a matter of pride that you should not sink to that level. If you will do this, you will find that in a short time you will have regained your status and authority; otherwise the teacher will remain as he is now, a mere slave.

The ancient tradition is that in time of need a man should be able to turn for counsel to his *guru*, to the one most fitted to give it. Do you find that this holds good today? Every year at least twentyfive or thirty students pass through your hands; and after twentyfive to thirty years there must be thousands of them. How many of them come back to you for advice about their problems of life? They turn to their parents, to wife or husband, brother or friend, but not to their teacher. The man who should be able to help them most is not consulted. Why?—because the teacher is not a *guru*, he is only a paid servant. If however you refuse to get bogged down in petty politics, but give your attention to the political issues of universal concern, you will rise in men's estimation and they will come running to you for your advice.

A story is told about Mirabai—whether authentic or not I cannot say. Mirabai had a difficult problem and she decided to lay it before the sage Tulsidas. "My father tells me to do one thing, my husband another; what shall I do?" she asked. Tulsidas replied, "Bharat renounced his mother, Prahlad his father, Vibhishan his brother; whoever acts against God, however great or intimate a friend he may be, should be regarded as an enemy to be renounced." Then he added humbly; "That is my own opinion; you must do as seems best to you." In this way Mirabai sought out Tulsidas for advice. That should be a *guru's* privilege, that students in their thousands should seek him out whenever they need counsel about the problems of life. You, the teachers of India, have

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

lost that privilege, but you can regain it if you will keep free of political entanglements.

III. The Teacher : Soldier of Peace

Teachers must know clearly where their duty lies.

There are two departments of Government, police and education, which are fundamentally opposed to each other. The fact is that there are mutually conflicting trends in the country, and the existence of mutually contradictory Government departments is the result.

In a number of places recently, police have forced an entry into University premises in order to put down violence. This action has been much criticised on the grounds that the police have no right to enter the University. But what astonishes me is that University men themselves should take such a limited view of the extent of their jurisdiction. The whole of India is their University campus, and it is a disgrace to the professors and teachers that there should be police action anywhere within its boundaries. The *acharya's* duty is to understand all trends of thought, to transform men's minds and hearts and to point the way to a transformation of their lives. When our very calling as teachers is to bring about such changes, we should feel ashamed that India has any need for a police force. The need would not arise if the people of India were to live in peace, alert to their rights and to their duties, and tackle their problems with a clear understanding of the factors involved. If that were so, the whole police department might be closed down, and the Government would be delighted. But so long as you do not succeed in bringing these conditions about peace will have to be maintained somehow. If you cannot prevent outbreaks of violence the nation will have to make provision for suppressing them. Educationists—the teachers, professors, *acharyas*—are the violence-*prevention* department; the Government police are the violence-*suppression* department. When preventive measures succeed there is no need for suppression.

Many people, including myself, were pained that a police

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

force should enter a University campus; and it is indeed a painful incident. But we must accept all India as our campus.

1. *Acharyas* should make their influence felt throughout the country.
2. They should exercise their influence in political circles.
3. They should deliberately plan to make police action unnecessary in the future.

We should be thinking on these lines, rather than giving all our attention to minor incidents on the University campus. Let violence be prevented, and it will not have to be suppressed.

Let every teacher understand the dignity and worth of his vocation, so that the blessing of the sages of old may rest upon us. India has a great tradition of outstanding teachers, from ancient times right down to the present, even greater perhaps than that of Greece. Rabindranath Tagore was no nationalist in the narrow sense; he had a universal outlook. Yet he sang with pride of how the divine word was first framed in the sacred groves of India, how the first dawn of wisdom arose in Indian forests. He reminded us again and again that our culture is neither a city culture nor a village culture but a forest-culture. Rome had a city-culture, the aboriginal peoples of some parts of Asia have a village-culture. But the culture of India was a forest-culture. The sages made their home in the forest, withdrawn from the common life of the world, and pondered deeply, seeking truth; they would then go among the people, teaching from house to house the wisdom they had found. The root of the word *acharya* is *char*: the same root is found in *acharan* (precept), *vicharan* (travelling), *vichar* (thought, deliberation), *sanchar* (arduous progress), *prachar* (spreading knowledge); all these meanings contribute to the ideal of an *acharya*.

When a farmer prepares to sow wheat or gram in his field he doesn't discuss the matter with his bullocks. He makes his decision, and then sets the bullocks to work. Our present professors and teachers are the bullocks; they obey orders, they

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

teach whatever "prescribed book" they are told to teach. The very people who ought to be responsible for guiding the whole nation on the right path have themselves lost their way and fallen so low that they are no better than paid servants. Universities and colleges have become an arena of political fisticuffs, where all the parties fight for control of the colleges. This is an intolerable state of affairs and we must plan to get rid o it without delay. Teachers must refuse any longer to be the puppets of the political parties: there must be a solemn resolve to keep clear of all that sort of thing as beneath their dignity.

There should be a form of pledge which teachers may sign. It should contain a statement that we regard it as the duty of our position to offer our guidance to the whole nation, and that we will therefore take no part in party politics or power politics, whether local or national. We should also declare that we regard ourselves as soldiers of peace, armed with the best of all weapons of peace—education, education for true knowledge. What better tool can there be for the establishment of peace? With this weapon in our hands and our students by out side we shall carry out our duty, working for the peace of the whole country, and maintaining our complete freedom from political entanglement.

Such a pledge will at once raise you in public esteem. People will begin to regard you in a new light. Bihar has a glorious tradition of sages and *rishis*—Yagnavalkya, Janak, Buddha, Mahaveera. With this living tradition behind you, the people of Bihar will respect and honour you if you stand before them as true teachers, guides and soldiers of peace.

Once you have set your hands to such a pledge the flag of revolution will be raised. It is easy to reach all the 70,000 villages of Bihar. But when the teachers undertake this work the spirit of it will spread and a new, independent power will make itself felt.

IV. Acharya-Kul

The Pusa Road Conference gave me great pleasure, for I had

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the opportunity to meet a number of learned men. I found that these *pundits*, *acharyas* and professors were eager for self-knowledge, for the perception of their own true nature. There is a stanza by Tulsidas which says.

"Awake, awake, O root of life ! Do not the Vedas and the wise declare with one vioce that for the disorders and distress of dreams there is a cure?—Be wakeful."

If we try to overcome our dream troubles while we are still dreaming, the dream-fantasy will continue and we shall only remain longer in the confusion of the dream-world. The best cure for the maladies of sleep is to wake up. I am happy to say that this kind of awakening seems to me to be taking place at the present time.

The teachers, *acharyas* and professors of Bihar are undertaking a great enterprise in founding this Acharya-kul. There could be no better name for it; the word *kul* means a family, and all of us teachers are members of one family. Every aspect of the work we mean to do—to commit ourselves to knowledge; to strive for mental purity; to watch over the development of our students with affectionate care; to study the problems of society with a disinterested endeavour to reach agreed conclusions for the guidance of the public—all of these are part of the task of establishing the unity of the family. These are the reasons which led me to choose the name Acharya-kul. *Kul* is a beautiful word and it is one of those words which have links with both Arabic and Samskrit. It implies *all* ((*kul*) teachers; there is no question of high or low, of great or small. *All* teachers are to be equally honoured; *all* will work together: those are the conditions of success.

Nothing can be done by remaining aloof from the problems and difficulties of India. Gautama, the Buddha, once said : "It is the man who climbs a hill top who is able to see what is going on in the world below and so give guidance." The Vedas use exactly the same imagery : "Those who have scaled the mountain top inspire and strengthen the hearts of those who

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

work in the world below." When men's resolution fails them and their vision and will are weakened, they receive new strength from those who, having reached the summit by their own efforts, turn to help their fellowmen below. So says the Veda, so says Gautama the Buddha.

The purpose of the Acharya-kul is not acquire power; there are other associations for that. The purpose is to make us teachers more aware of our duties and more ready to fulfil them, and so enable us to regain our rightful place in society. For we have sunk in public esteem. *The Mahabharata* describes how one day Dharmaraj allowed himself to say something in doubtful taste about the death of Dronacharya's son. The result was that his chariot, which had always been enabled by the power of his virtue to move through the air a few inches above the ground, immediately sank to the earth. Teachers also should have kept their "chariot", raised above the world's values, but they have let it rink into the dust, and have come dowu to the common level. The remedy however is very plain and simple; it is "know thyself," and the moment a man achieves this realisation he is set free. A man who knows himself has become a new man; the vision re-shapes the form. And I, therefore, feel confident that as we go on working on the lines which we are now taking up, we shall find solutions to the various problems which we now face. If we stand firm in our conviction that this work must be done, we shall find that our doubts are resolved, step by step, by our experience. The *Gita* emphasizes the need for decisiveness of mind, saying that a man who lacks this quality squanders his intellect on many different courses, whereas a man who concentrates on one decisive act becomes a *karma-yogi* and a man of achievement.

People have told me that they doubt whether an effort of this kind can achieve anything, or make any impact, in chaotic times like ours. There is so much darkness all round us, how can it be removed? But I say, just think a moment about what darkness really is. There is a story about a man who fell to the earth one night, with two or three companions, from his house in the sun. Being sundwellers, they had no conception of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

darkness, and they thought that the darkness of night was a great accumulation of dirt and rubbish. So they began trying to dig it out, and made such a noise that the people of the neighourhood were roused from sleep. Out they came, lanterns in hand, to find to find out who had come and what they were doing; and in the light of the lanterns all the "dirt" disappeared in a twinkling, leaving the sundwellers feeling very puzzled. The lanterns brought light and light always dispels darkness. No matter how ancient the darkness, it is a weak thing; it is cannot show its face before the light. A deep cave may have been in darkness for thoustands of years, but take a torch into it and the darkness is put to flight in a moment.

If our surroundings seem dark it is because we have no light. If we had a light, the darkness would disappear; the only way to get rid of it is to bring the light. Any other method only perpetuates the illusion that the darkness is real. Attempts to dig it out with a shovel give it a false substance. The fact is that darkness is nothing in itself, it is merely absence of light, and when light comes in, darkness ends.

As for you and me, what is the nature of our strength, such as it is? Is it not the nature of light?—the light, of knowledge, of wisdom, of thought and reflection? What power in the world can stand before it?

Remember that the world is becoming one and men are coming nearer to one another. Even the high heavens are not so distant as before When science has made so much progress, when the intellect has such far-reaching power, it wil be a disaster for humanity if the heart remains small. The problems of today arise from this discrepancy; our conflicts, whether between "capital" and "labour", between Hindu and Muslman, between India and Pakistan, or in Vietnam, all spring from the conflict between big brains and small hearts. If the brain had remained small like the heart there would not be so much trouble.

Man's intellectual horizon has today expanded so much that the attainments of a Newton or a Vyas seem small in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

comparison. We possess much more knowledge than they did. An ordinary college boy nowadays knows more mathematics than Newton, who knew nothing of the differential calculus although he was the greatest mathematician of his time. The knowledge of geography also had narrow limits in former times. When an English lawyer arrived at the court of the Emperor Akbar, saying that he had come from Queen Elizabeth of England, Akbar learned for the first time that the world contained a country called England, which had a queen. Little children in primary school today know more geography than Akbar did.

So our brains have expanded, but our hearts remain small. we call ourselves Harijans, landowners, Sikhs, Brahmins; we label men as belonging to this party or to that. But differences of caste and creed, sect and language, of party and province, must all be swallowed up in Sarvodaya, and Sarvodaya will only come about when these dividing lines are overcome. So long as people's minds are filled with these petty distinctions and their thoughts centred on such trivial questions, we are simply unfit for the demands of our times. Our smallness of heart is unworthy of the largeness of our universe.

Should we then restrict our intellects, throw away our science? That cannot be done. Once science has come, it has come to stay. It is not possible for us to forget it and go back. On the contrary, intellectual progress is going to continue, and scientific knowledge is going to expand even futher. There is no alternative, we are to survive, except to expand our hearts. We can no longer think of human beings as "high" or "low", as Indians or Pakistans—that will no longer work. The world outlook of *Jai Jagat* is the only fitting one for our generation, for the world is ours, and we are world-citizens, "world-men" (*viswa-manava*) as the *Rig Veda* phrased it long ago.

If teachers do not possess this universal outlook, how can we look for it in others? Ordinary men's thoughts are limited to the interests of their own little family, their own little village. But a teacher's thought must rise higher and his heart must be larger. When Acharya-kul has been brought into being, I look

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

forward to seeing a new strength generated in Bihar, that will change the face of Bihar. We have a great company of invisible witnessess. The spirits of Gautam the Buddha, of Mahaveera, of King Janak and Lord Krishna and the Emperor Ashoka, are surely watching what their successors in this land are doing; I have no doubt that they will bless our work.

V. The School as Third Force

1. Teachers and the Community

I laugh a good deal nowadays, partly because although there is plenty to weep about, nothing is to be gained by weeping. I laugh also because I have discovered a way to make all India happy, if only people will accept it, and I think of the happy future. And I laugh also because this world does not appear to me to have much reality. And yet the condition of India ought to cause us much concern; inwardly I grieve over it. We have three kinds of trouble, and we must put our whole strength into getting rid of them, for twenty years after independence are still with us.

The first of our troubles is poverty, which seems to me to be on the increase. There may be several reasons for this, but our negligence is a major factor. We have not done our duty; we have not provided for the country's basic needs, which ought to have taken precedence over any secondary needs.

Our ancestors have handed down to us this injunction. "Increase the production of food; let this be your vow." These words come from the Upanishad, which is not a pamphlet about the five-year plan, but a treatise on the higher knowledge. This book of *Brahma-Vidya* not only directs us to produce more food, it urges us to take a vow in the matter. Yet we have forgotten this fundamental task; we have taken up various secondary matters and neglected this primary thing. Where there is not enough food, mutual love and compassion are only a mirage. Food production is of such fundamental importance that the whole strength of the people and of the Government should have been mobilized for it. But this was not done. It

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

was not a case of idleness; work was done, but no attention was paid to food.

After Independence Mahatma Gandhi warned us that if food were in short supply our freedom itself would be undermined, and that every household ought to be growing food. He urged us to use every little corner of vacant land to grow greens and vegetables. He told townsmen who had no land to grow vegetables in pots. From two or three pots you may perhaps get only one or two kg. of vegetables in year, but that is much better than nothing at all. And if people were to begin to do it in millions, the produce would add up to a very large amount. Ram falls in tiny drops, but it falls everywhere and the whole earth becomes moist. If every home grows a little, the total will be tremendous. In this way everyone will learn that each should contribute towards national production. Otherwise we have no right to eat. As St. Paul said, "He who will not work, neither shall he eat." Mahatma Gandhi said the same thing; produce food, however small the quantity.

Japan has put Gandhiji's ideas into practice. Not a foot of land remains unused. Kagawa, a great Japanese thinker and social worker, has written a very fine book called *On the Steps*, about methods of farming on hill slopes. He describes how Japanese youth cultivated the hill-sides, planting trees to prevent soil erosion, how they left not an inch of land unused, how in this way they saved the country. But here in India what a lot of land lies waste!—what a painful sight!

The second of our troubles is that we have entirely lost our belief in self-reliance and self-sufficiency. How can we talk about India standing on her own feet when even our food, and the milk powder for our children, come from outside? Grain is imported from America, and other things also from other countries. We never ask ourslves where the things that we buy come from. We do not reflect on what debts we are piling up or how we are exposing ourselves to outside political pressure. Even manufactured goods are being imported; some are sold cheaply second-hand, and our people buy them. No, we

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

no longer believe in *swadeshi*, we no longer take pride in producing what we need.

So far as education is concerned, we have made every possible mistake, gone wrong everywhere. Education today has no spiritual dimension. It is no longer based on the principles which in the past have been India's strength and stay, and which are still her strength today. This is our third trouble; there is no productive work in our current education, it keeps knowledge and work apart. There are no jobs for those who pass out of our colleges, and the result is that if we educate people we add to unemployment, and if we do not educate them we add to ignorance. Both are dangerous. The whole of the *Bhagvadgita* bears witness against us. "Janaka and the ancients attained their perfection through work alone; therefore never cease to work. A wise man should labour for the welfare of the world as the mother plays for the sake of her children". This is the teaching of the *Gita*, the greatest scripture of India. Yet although we possess this book, we have lost our whole philosophy of work, and both knowledge and work have suffered in consequence.

Our social behaviour has also fallen to a very low level. In several parts of India riots have taken place over language issues. This is a dangerous trend—must India be split up because of language? Communal and religious riots have taken place, provincial pride and jealousy have been inflamed, and millions of rupees worth of property set on fire and destroyed—all because of dying rumour and misunderstanding. Now while this is the state of affairs, are teachers going to shut themselves inside their schools like women in *purdah* or come out and acquit themselves like heroes? Will they wash their hands of it all, saying that their responsibility is confined to the school, or will they recognize a responsibility to the outside world also? I call myself a teacher, and I am never so happy as when I can devote myself to study and to teaching; it is such a peaceful and satisfying kind of life that I should probably live a hundred years If I could stick to it. But I have had to leave it and come out, because India is in danger. I except you also to take

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

on some project in a district or comparable area. There is no need to go to every village. Select a rural area and make a compelete survey of the villages in it so that you are familiar with the conditions. Then consider what you can do to improve them, and draw up a plan of action. Survey the villages and plan to help them, survey the towns and take it upon yourselves to see that no riots occur. If riots do break out, do everything you can to stop them. But it should be your responsibility to take action even before any riot breaks out, so that you can control the situation.

Politicians are expert in creating divisions. If their power is to be broken another kind of power must be brought into being—the power of the village, and along with it the power of knowledge, the power of the teacher. We need them both. One is the power of production, of growing more food; the man who can rely on his fields can never be defeated even by war. The second is the power of knowledge. You, the teachers, have been entrusted with the task of forming the minds of men. But the status of the teacher today is not what it once was. There are divisions among teachers, divisions among students, and also divisions of teachers against students.

The power of knowledge will only emerge when those who are now divided unite. How can any power be generated so long as those who by nature belong together form themselves into separate organisations? The answers to the problems which confront India can only be given by the teacher; but the teacher must first renounce politics and throw in his lot with the common man with *lokaniti*. Unless he renounces politics he cannot influence politics. He will be effective only when he rejects the values of the power-structure and chooses those of the people.

I have been speaking of village power. As things are today people cannot imagine the possibility of a political structure without political parties. We have a delegated democracy, not a participating democracy. But nothing can be done if the teacher considers that his duties begin and end in his school or

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

college classroom. You must get into touch with the people, for otherwise you will have no influence on public affairs.

Teachers ought to come together from time to time to discuss matters of public interest, and publish their conclusions in the name of the teaching profession. You should be prepared to offer this kind of guidance to the public, and the public shoud have confidence that your finding will be based upon an objective and dispassionate study of the problems. Your work will assist the Government too, and your influence will come to be felt in the country. But you will never gain any influence by entangling yourself in power politics; you will simply get led by the nose. So keep out of politics, but come forward and take up some project for service, and give the people the hope and confidence that in time of need they may look to you for guidance.

2. Qualities of a teacher : Responsibility and Freedom

A teacher needs to possess at least three qualities. The first is that he must be an affectionate and loving friend to his students. This is of such importance that without it he can never be a teacher at all. The second is that he himself must be a tireless seeker after knowledge, always studying, continually adding new items to his store. He must become an "ocean of learning", a votary of science.

Both these qualities are essential for the teacher. If you have affection, but no knowledge, you may make a good mother, mothers are full of affection but not necessarily of knowledge, though some have both, like the mother of the great sage Kapila, whom he instructed. Generally speaking however, what we expect from mothers is not knowledge but love and tenderness. But if you (as teachers) are lacking in knowledge your affections may lead you into blind devotion and sentimentality. If on the other hand, you are lacking in love and affection, your intellect and devotion to knowledge may make you a philosopher or a detached and objective thinker of great valve to the country; but you can't be a teacher. The

CC-0 Agamnigam`Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

teacher must possess *both* a delight in ideas and in the daily increase of knowledge, *and* also an affection and love for the pupils.

The teacher needs a third quality also. Political activity today has a powerful attraction for the students, and the students are under the care of the teachers. If the teacher himself takes on a political colouring and becomes entangled, it is as if the ocean were to refuse to accept the Ganga. The Ganga of knowledge approaches such professors and teachers, and they will have none of her because they care only for politics. Teachers are in a position of great authority and they should therefore keep clear of all political involvement. Imagine a hospital worker who is also a friend of some political party. If he were to start paying more or less attention to patients according to their politics, he would be unfit for his work; a hospital worker must be impartial. If he puts his party first he is useless. It is the same with a judge. Can a judge belong to a party? Can there be any party spirit in justice? Of course not. Neither can the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly show partiality no any group. Teachers are in the same position. If a teacher gets involved in politics he is no longer his own master he is a mere tool in the hands of another, and loses his independence. He does not act, he is acted upon. He can no longer exercise the functions of a teacher, nor keep his proper status.

Education in the old days was not in this predicament. The story of Sri Krishna tells how even while he was still a child he overcame Kamsa and set the country free. However, his father realised that he had not yet had any schooling, he had no degree, and sent him to a *guru* for his education. The *guru* thought to himself : "This boy is a hero, and he has been sent to me to be taught. Well and good, I will teach him." He set Sri Krishna to work with a poor Brahmin boy, and sent the pair of them into the jungle to cut firewood. The Brahmin boy, Sudama, was very poor, Sri Krishna was the son of a powerful king, but they studied together. There was no "public" school for the rich only. such as we have now-a-days, where the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

ordinary, "public" cannot go. Sri Krishna's *guru* made no such distinctions; he gave the same physical labour to both the boys alike, he taught both alike, and when their education was completed he gave them both his blessing, saying, "You have done your work well; you have given good service, and he who serves acquires knowledge, therefore your studies are completed; I bid you both farewell".

I have told you this story to make you realise that the *guru*, in those days, was not subject to political authority. The *guru* was above politics. The Department of Education to day should be just as much above politics as the Department of Justice, which is independent of the government and can decide a case against the government if it sees fit. The judges receive their salaries from the government, but they are not subject to governmental pressure. The same principle should be accepted for education as has been accepted for the judiciary. If that happens, education will go ahead. No educational problem will ever be solved unless we can shake off the clutches of the politicians in which we are held today.

On 15th August, 1947—Independence Day—I was living at Paunar near Wardha, and the people invited me to address a meeting at Wardha. "Friends", I said, "we have got our independence. Should we now fly the old flag even for one day?" "Of course not", they replied—for if the old flag flies it means that the old government still goes on. I then suggested that just as the new regime has a hew flag, it should have a new kind of education. The old education means that the old regime goes on, and that there is no real change. Gandhiji with great fairsghtedness suggested a type of education which he called 'Nai Talim.' I do not mean to say tbat Nai Talim should be accepted merely because it is his. Gandhiji did not desire us to accept everything he said blindly or swallow it whole. However, if the government were in my hands—a thing which will not happen—I would give all the school children three months' holiday and tell them to go and play, to grow strong, to work in the fields or with the craftsmen, as they please, to enjoy their independence. Mean-while I would call a conference of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

educationaists and ask them to draw up a plan for education in free India, to be ready within three months. When it was ready, I would open the schools again. Instead of that, however, we have first, second, third, fourth Five-year Plans, but the same old education as before, no change at all.

The Government tells us that there is an educational "explosion", an enormous expansion of education, which brings all kinds of new problems in its train. But my doubt is, "Do good things ever explode? If education has 'exploded' it must surely mean that it is a bad and dangerous thing?" And that is what it really is, today. If you don't expand education, people will remain ignorant, and if you do expand it they will become unemployable. The choice is between ignorance and uselessness—which will you choose?" The last time Dr. Zakir Hussain came to visit me I told him all this. His reply was: "Vinobaji, you said that the educated are useless for work, but it is worse than that; they are useless and ignorant too." That was his amendment, and I accepted it. That is why I say we ought immediately to have changed the pattern of education. What is done is done, but we must change it now.

Education, then, is said to be a big problem. Why is it, I ask, that something which is meant to solve problems has itself become a problem? The reason of it is that education has got into the hands of the State. You have given to a Director of a Education an authority which you never gave to Shankaracharya or to Tulsidas. Any book the Director cares to choose becomes a text-book throughout the State and every student has to study it. It is imposed on the whole of Bihar North, South, East, West, and if the children don't study it they will fail. Tulsidas possessed no such power to compel people to read his *Ramayana*, though plenty of people do read it of their own free will. But you consider that a Director of Education is competent to decide on compulsory text books for all.

To sum up, the whole field of education should be freed from Government control. It is in your power to bring this about,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

for if you yourselves, the teachers, assert your freedom, education also will gain its freedom.

3. Unite Knowledge with Work

Gandhiji, Sri Krishna and Patanjali have all taught that knowledge must not be separated from action. A society in which some people had all the knowledge and other did all the work would be a *Rahu-Ketu* affair. Rahu is nothing but head, a head without a body; and Ketu is nothing but trunk, the lower portion without a head. The villagers would be the Ketu and the townfolk would be the Rahu. If that were to come about there would be serious consequences. We already have divisions of caste, state and language, and divisions of party are now arising also. If to all these we were to add yet another division—between those who do nothing but labour, and those who do nothing but study, so that the learned have no work and the workers no learning, and the peasants hold the power of labour, the townsmen the power of knowledge—what will be the state of affairs? If we want to increase our production, to develop, to achieve good results, knowledge and action must go together. This is the essence of Gandhiji's teaching.

It is interesting that while India has not so far accepted Gandhiji's ideas, China has accepted them fully. In this regard, Gandhi and Mao are in agreement. The people of China have one kind of school only for everyone, which they call a "half and half school", and in which three hours daily are given to work and three hours to study. Their communist Government sees to it that when a thing is accepted it is at once put into practice. (This is an admirable characteristic of communism. We people, on the other hand, are always hesitating, thinking, considering, making rules.) In China, then, everyone without exception attends the same school and works shoulder to shoulder with the rest on equal terms, without any distinction of "high" or "low". Knowledge and action go together, and are for all alike. The teaching may have a Communist or Socialist colouring; that is another matter. But the Chinese have succeeded in educating everyone in knowledge and work

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

together, half and half, and we too have to see to it that all the children of this country should work and should also learn, on equal terms.

Lord Krishna is our model charioteer, warrior, author of the *Gita guru*, disciple, he was ready to be all these in turn as occasion arose. He was nineteen years older than Arjuna, but he was not proud to act as his servant. When the fighting was over for the day, Arjuna, the Kshatriya, would perform his evening worship, Sri Krishna would groom Arjuna's horses and find his worship in work. This is the ideal which we should aim at; all or *pundits* and teachers, and all our students, should become master of both these life-forces, expert in manual work and expert knowledge also. That is the way forward.

4. The Scientific and the Spiritual

Now another matter, in which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was may best propagandist. Wherever he went, in Russia or America, he would tell people that "Vinoba says that the scientific and the spiritual aspects of life must be brought together." Politic, and religions are outdated; their day is over. The day of sectarian religions is over, and they must yield place to spiritual wisdom. The day of party politics is over and it must give place to science.

I recall also reading a newspaper report of a speech Jawaharlal made at Patna. "Although I am involved in politics", he said, "I am in agreement with Vinoba's ideas Party politics must go, sectarian religions must go. Our basic problems will only be solved when we apply to them a broad-based science a broad-based spiritual wisdom." Otherwise, what will happen? Politicians who work for unity end, though they do not realise it, by increasing divisions. The Bengali language has been torn in two, so has Urdu, so has Punjabi. Jordan, Korea, Berlin are all divided. The politician knows how to tear things apart, and imagines that somehow they will put themselves together. The problems of the world will never be solved in that way. They will only be solved when people get together and think as

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

one group, when they shake off the yoke of narrow political doctrines and narrow religious scripture.

When I talk of being freed from scriptures people often feel distressed. I assure you that there is no need for alarm. Take, for example, the custom of making an offering. In olden times it took the form of pouring *ghee* into a fire. Does it follow that we must do the same? Is that real religion or real offering? In those days there was no coal. no kerosine oil; thousands of cattle grazed in the forest and *ghee* was the natural means of keeping the fire burning. I once suggested to a priest as a wedding that instead of pouring *ghee* into the fire he should collect it in a vessel, offer it to the deity, and then distribute it as *prasad*. The people liked the idea. It preserves a reverence for the older custom and also recognizes the new conditions. We must realize that there is no virtue in keeping up out-dated practices in the name of religion.

I will give you another example. We all know the story of the game of dice played by the Kauravas against the Pandavas, and how at last the Pandavas staked Draupadi herself. They lost the throw and Draupadi became Duryodhana's slave. Many *pundits* were present, including the wisest men of the day. Draupadi appealed to them. "What do you think?" The asked "Is a woman a man's property to be staked in a game of dice?" And the great sages were puzzled, they could not answer her. Yet now-a-days any school boy could answer at once. 'Stake a woman at the gaming table as if she were a piece of property? What a wicked thing to do !" he would exclaim.

So it comes to this : it is foolish to accept all the ideas of these ancient thinkers without question, just because they are found in a "religious" text. In these matters we have to use our own spiritual insight.

Yet in our schools there is no place for study of spiritual wisdom and insight. The are "secular" schools; so the *Ramayana the Bilble, the Quran* may not be taught in them. We may perhaps teach as "literature" a few selections or "pieces" from

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the *Ramayana* or other books. But how can this piecemeal approach promote my spiritual insight? So, in the name of secularism, our finest literature is being neglected. This is a mistaken notion of secularism. India's great spiritual heritage must be studied and taught in all schools, and side by side with it must be found the study of modern science.

5. Language and Education

A word about language. I am very found of languages and I have studied a good many of them. I have some knowledge of all the fifteen languages recognized in the Indian Constitution, and also of Persian and Arabic. I made a special study of Arabic in order to write *The Essence of the Quran.* Besides these I have managed to get a smattering of Chinese and Japanese through friedds from these countries who accompanied me for a time during my tours. I learned them for friendship's sake, not for the sake of learning. I find that the structure of Japanese is not unlike that of Indian languages. Chinese is unusual, but very beautiful. The written form is distinctive; it is a pictorial script with thousands of pictographs. China has many spoken tongues, but the pictographs have the same meaning everywhere, so that all Chinese can understand one another's written language.

I have studied English and French, and when a German accompanied me I did not find it difficult to learn some German, for these three languages have many similarities. I tried Latin, which is closely related to Sanskrit. That seemed to me to be enough, but a friend insisted that I ought to learn Esperanto, and when a teacher became available I did so. I am telling you all this to show you that I have done a good deal of work on languages and that I feel a great respect for them all. If need arises I am ready to learn new once even now. So when I talk about languages, you must understand that I feel no kind of prejudice about any language, for or against. There is no such thing in my heart.

First, English. Many people consider education to be incomplete without English, because English is a window on the world.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I agree that it is so, but if the house has only one window, opening in one direction only, the people inside the house get a very one-sided view of the world. If you want an all-round view you need at least seven windows—English, French, German and Russian, for the Western world. Chinese and Japanes for the East, and Arabic for the region westward of Iran. With only one language window your view will be incomplete and misleading. If we depend on that language only we shall not be able to think independently.

I agree that in India we have plenty of opportunity for teaching and learning English, so that comparatively few people study other languages. But India will be on the right road only when we have expert knowledge of all these seven languages; otherwise, willy nilly we shall find ourselves in the Anglo-American camp. I am not saying that this would necessarily be a bad thing, but I do say that if we learn only English, these countries are going to exercise a disproportionate influence upon us, and information about the rest of the world will reach us, if at all, coloured by their point of view. In my opinion it is a dangerous mistake for a huge country like india to have only one door or one window to the outside world.

Another point. We accept it as our duty to give all our children eight years of schooling. Now it is useless to introduce any of these "windows", English, French, German etc. during that eight-year period. The children will not learn much English or French at that stage, and what little they do learn they will find no use for. Most of them will leave school at the end of the eight years and go to work on the land or settle down to some other occupation. They have no need of a foreign language, and there is no sense in burdening them with one. "What do we want with a window?" they would ask. "People need windows when their houses have walls. Our houses have no walls, and even the roof lets in the daylight." No, we should not bother about "windows", we should stop loading these languages on to them. They would then have time to study their own language properly. At present they get no real knowledge either of their own language or of English. If they were to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

learn their own language will, they would find it useful in life. But alas, the teacher—please excuse my saying so—is a mere paid labourer. He is told in written circulars from "authority", what his time-table must be, what he must teach, how many hours to give to each subject. And the wage-slave does as he is told. So the childern's acquaintance with their mother-tongue is poor, and their English also is poor. If, instead of this, the children were to learn their mother tongue well it would be of real benefit and use to them all.

I want to make a suggestion. Children who learn Hindi should also learn Samskrit. By that I mean that they should study the derivation of words, which is the foundation of language. For example, there are in use in Hindi at least four hundred derivatives of the Samskrit root *yug* or *yog*. This is a sample of the "estate" which the Hindi tongue inherits from its parent Samskrit. Without it, Hindi would not be capable of expressing such a universal range of thought. The study of Samskrit derivations must be part and parcel of the study of Hindi, and the study of Hindi cannot be said to be complete without it.

Take one of Tulsidas' famous couplets; it is nothing but Samskrit written so that the common people could understand it. Tulsidas was not out to teach pronuciation, he was out to teach the *Ramayana*; why should he adopt a "correct" Samskrit pronunciation which the people could not understand or learn? Bengalis will tell you that their language possesses all three sibilants—the "*S*" of Sankar, the *Sh* of 'Shanmukha" and the *s* of "saint". But they pronounce all three alike in their speech. Their greatest poet, Rabindranath Tagore, did not aim at teaching language, but at imparting spiritual thoughts. He wrote in the popular language, using the popular pronunciation,—but he used a great many Samskrit derivatives. A large number of Indian languages owe a similar debt to Samskrit, and so the study of Samskrit roots and derivatives is necessary. If Hindi is to develop on sound lines these points need to be carefully considered.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Another question is asked—whether or not education should be given through the mother tongue? A stange question, for I do not understand how there can be two opinions on the subject. If you were to ask a donkey's foal if he wanted to be taught in the donky's language or in the lion's language, he would say that however fine the lion's language may be, he can understand only the donkey's language, not the lion's. It is obvious that it is the mother tongue which touches the human heart, and there ought to be no doubt at all that it should be the medium of education.

The next question is, how long a period is need to master it? Four years of schooling or five? The Commission report says, rightly, that it should not be more than ten. My own opinion is that it could be done in five years if an all-out effort were made. But there is no doubt that the mother tongue should be the medium of education from first to last.

When I went to Assam I studied Assamese and the Assamese scriptures. I published a collection of extracts from one scriptural text, *The Essence of Nama Gosha*. I learnt that four hundred years ago there lived a writer named Bhatta Deva who wrote in prose. It is usually thought that prose came into use only after the coming of the English and the English language. I found, however, that Bhattadeva had written an Assamese commentary on the Gita, called *The Gita in Prose*, also a commentary *The Bhagavat in prose*. I liked these books very much. The prose *Bhagavad Gita* was being written in Assamese at about the same time as the *Bible* was being printed in Caxton's printing press in England. I give this example to show you what a fine and expressive language Assame is ! It will need a scientific vocabulary and while this is gradually evolving, English words will continue in use. What difficulty is there in that? There is no need to wait until we have coined words for "oxygen" and "hydrogen", before we can teach children about the composition of water ! If we begin in this way it will be easy. Our Indian languages are well developed and capable of future development.

The Marathi *Jnaneswari* was written by Saint Gnaneswar

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

at about the same time as Chaucer in England wrote his *Canterbury Tales*. The vocabulary of the *Canterbury Tales* is not a quarter as rich as that of the *Jnaneswari*, which was by no means the first book to be written in Marathi. It is recognized as a great classic, and the *Cantetbury Tales* cannot compare with it the mastery of its construction.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

3

Bhoodan Movement

Our sub-continent is widely scattered in more than half-a-million villages from North to South, West to East and in Central India. The villagers were devoid of basic and daily needs. There was scarcity of water, electricity, approach roads, educational system, sanitation system, ponds for cattle and such other things which make in life of a common man slightly comfortable. On account of the expansion in the family, the land was badly divided among several claimants. There were millions of people who were landless. Their existence was becoming acute day by day. The productivity of land was poor and the little produce of the soil was insufficient for the family.

The Bhoodan Movement started by Vinoba Bhave was a new innovations in the socio-economic life of the teeming millions living in more th n six lakhs of villages. Though his speeches, writings and regular contacts with the affluent people holding several acres of land Vinoba Bhave requested them to part with a sizeable portion of it so that it could be given to the laadless. For this mission he moved from village to village, from one end of the country to the other. The response in several regions was quite favourable and people donated their land in the Bhoodan Yajna. People offered their wells, implements and several other articles used in farming. Vinoba Bhave distributed these donations among the needy and advised them

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to work for better production. As a result of his efforts, several families which were landless, received the ownership of land and in a few years their economic status was enhanced. In some cases, unproductive land in the far-flung areas was donated. It gave out less dividends but on the whole the donation was beneficial for the receiver.

Vinoba Bhave knew the fact that the landless labourer was the victim of the landlord since ages. His economic means were so meagre that he could hardly live. His family was always at the mercy of the landlord and the money-lender. Vinobaji wanted to remove these age-old shackles of the landless labourer and wished for him a socio-economic status worthy of the society in which he was to live.

After his release from the Dhulia jail, Vinoba proceeded to Wardha. Since the Satyagraha Ashram had been banned and locked by the Government during the 1932 Civil Disobedience Movement, he stayed with some of his colleagues in a few rooms near the Cotton Market for a couple of months. During his imprisonment, Vinoba was convinced more than ever that real social and economic progress in the country was impossible of achievement without paying special attention to the villages. On return, he, therefore, decided to organize intensive work in the villages of Wardha Taluka. He established an organization for the purpose and named it *Gramseva Mandal*—'Village Service Association'—with its headquarters at Nalwadi, a village of 800 population and about a mile and half from Wardha town, mostly inhabited by landless labour, especially the Harijans.

Vinoba shifted to the Nalwadi village on 25 December 1932 and wrote the following letter to Gandhiji :

> Nalwadi, a village about a mile and a half from Wardha, is inhabited only by Harijans. Wardha Ashram will complete the twelfth year of its existence soon a *yuga* has completed its full circle. Experiences during the period have been satisfactory. Egoism has faded away. The conviction that Cod alone is, has grown on us. For so many years I

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

did not live in Wardha, but at your behest. To me nothing counts in this world save your blessings. I may say that it has been my constant endeavour during these twelve years to observe the Ashram vows. Yet I experience many failings within me. God has blessed me much more than my devotion towards Him deserves.

I know your blessings are even there to protect me. Even so, I write this letter to beseech them. Please do take care of this humble servant of yours. Kindly secure for him from Providence the fitness to be worthy of a sacrifice in your great cause. If there are any directions for the future, please do let me know.

Vinoba's respectful Pranams

Gandhiji was deeply touched by this letter to which he replied as under :

Chi. Vinoba,

Your love and faith full my eyes with tears of joy. I may or may not deverse them. But they are sure to do you infinite good. You will be an instrument of great service. It is good that you have shifted to Nalwadi.

My suggestions for the future are as follows : Without insisting on avoidance of milk, take care of your body. Your present duty is to spread an atmosphere against untouchability. Find time to read whatever I write on different occasions. It does not amount to very much. Keep on writing letters to me; even a letter a week will do.

Bapu's blessings

To begin with, Vinoba lived in Nalwadi in a very simple hut with walls made of ordinary bamboos. My wife, Madalsa, who lived in Nalwadi for over a year to study *Ramayana* and *Janneshwari* from Vinoba, tells me that this hut must have been used earlier by some village for keeping his cattle and goats. It had no bath-room attached to it and there were hardly any other facilities. Madalsa, therefore, used to go to Bajajwadi early morning every day after prayers only to take her bath.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Even the floor was *kuccha* and was occasionally plastered with cowdung. Sometime later, another ordinary bamboo structure with tiled roof was put up as a kitchen. In course of time, a shed for spinning and weaving of khadi was constructed on behalf of the Gramseva Mandal.

At Nalwadi, Vinoba made special experiments on hand-spinning with *takli* or a spindle which would cost the rural population only a few annas and on which by working for eight hours, a person could earn about 2 annas a day. Vinoba used to write occasionally to Gandhiji about his experiences on the *takli*. I have with me a copy of the ten-page letter written by Vinoba to Bapu, explaining in great detail his experiments with spinning on *takli*. One would scarce believe that the spread on the *takli* was faster than on the *charkha*. In the beginning, even Gandhiji did not accept this claim. But Vinoba's arithmetic ultimately proved to be incontrovertible.

Vinoba had prepared a programme for undertaking *pada-yatras*—tours on foot—in the surrounding villages for fourteen days in a month. On the fifteenth day, he and other workers would return to Nalwadi to exchange information and experience about their rural work, and start their journey on foot again the next day for another fourteen days. Such a tour of the villages was compared by Vinoba to the *pradakshina*—going round the idol in a temple. "The people of the villages," said Vinoba, "are like our Deity." "We must go to them again and again as we go to a temple for worship. We should make every effort to identify ourselves with the people. That is the only way to serve the villagers in a spirit of dedication."

According to Vinoba's scheme of rural reconstruction, each worker toured about a dozen villages intensively every fort-night. He had with him a detailed list of these villages, indi-cating their population, social condition and their economic problems. People were trained in hand-spinning and weaving so that they could not only earn some daily wages for their own maintenance but also manufacture khadi for local consumption. Some of the main workers of the Gramseva Mandal were

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Manohar Divan (whom Gandhiji had described in his statement on Vinoba in 1940 as 'a young man who has dedicated himself to the service of lepers') Gopalarao Kale, Babaji Moghe, Gopalrao Valunjkar, Vallabhswami, Tukaram Bua, Chhotelal Ramdasbhai, Dilip Kumar and Shankarro Chowdhury.

After about two years, these workers, instead of living in Nalwadi, settled down in the nearby villages of their choice. Each of them improvised an Ashram in the village where he lived. Some of the important villages selected for the purpose in Wardha taluka included Pulgaon, Daoli, Bhiwapur, Junona, Sindi, Rohini and Jamani. Some workers had constructed small cottages for themselves, while others lived in a small tied room provided by the villagers. Even food was often given to them by the village community. These workers organized collective sanitation of village, distributed medicines, held prayer meetings, repaired village approach roads and conducted training classes for those who cared to learn hand-spinning on *takli* or ordinary spinning wheel.

The Nalwadi Ashram consisted of about seven or eight workers, including some women. They held morning and evening prayers, did community spinning, cooked food, washed clothes and utensils, did sanitation and scavenging work and also spent a few hours on the study of the *Ramayana*, the *Gita*, *Jnaneshwari* and the *Upanishads*. Vinoba taught *Gitai* to men and women who joined his classes. The evening prayers were attended by quite a few persons living in Nalwadi village.

As a result of untiring efforts of Vinoba and his band of workers, 43 temples and 300 village wells were thrown open to the Harijans. This silent constructive work by the Gramseva Mandal for the removal of untouchability made a good impact on the village communities. It was the intention of the Gramseva Mandal to saturate all the villages within Wardha taluka with khadi so that the weaker sections could not only obtain some supplementary income during the off seasons but also become self-sufficient at least in their cloth requirements. The number of villages in Wardha Tehsil was about 310, and the total population about 2 lakhs.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

A monthly bulletin called *Ashram Vritta* was published under Vinoba's direction from time to time. It contained useful information in Marathi about the work of the Ashram and the four of the workers in the Wardha villages. Besides, Vinoba used to write letters to Bapu and Jamnalal Bajaj about his experiments.

Once Vinoba had objected to hand-spinning of fine yarn. He had compared coarse yarn with Valmiki's *Ramayana* and fine yarn to Banabhatt's *Kadambari*. Gandhiji disgreed with this view and addressed an interesting letter to Vinoba on 24 October 1932 :

> The comparison with Banabhatta and Valmiki is not right. Our forefathers forced the poor to produce Dacca muslin to gratify the delicate tastes of people who loved luxury. Let us atone for their sin by spinning as *yajna* yarn of the finest count and offer it to the Lord. The art in both cases is the same, but in olden times it ministered to selfishness. Let our art help in spreading the spirit of service. It is necessary to revive the old skill in order to popularize khadi among all classes of people. We should prove that what was possible then in the days of slavery can be done in the age of freedom too.

If this reasoning appeals to you, I need not explain to you why I put down 20 counts as the minimum for a voluntary spinner to achieve. There is, however, nothing inviolate about this figure; it is not laid down as a fixed principle. It is only a test of the devotion of the voluntary spinner.

If I have not been able to explain my point of view, you may write to me again and ask me. I have no doubt in the matter, but I cannot rest at ease till I have satisfied you.

About Vinoba's work in the villages, Gandhiji wrote in the same letter :

> I realize very well how exceedingly difficult it is to go into the villages. However, despite the difficulties, we must

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

go. I, therefore, very much like the beginning you are making.

In the course of letter addressed to Jamnalalji in August 1984, Vinoba observed :

> I experience unusual inspiration while spinning on *takli* so much so that my mother, *Gita* and *takli* have literally be come synonymous terms in my mental dictionary. *Ai*—mother —contains all the rich experience I gathered at home during childhood. *Gita* incorporates all the wisdom from the *Vedas* and the tradition of saints in India. And *takli* reveals to me all the experience gained Bapu's guidance.

I another letter, written on 10 February 1935, Vinoba stated :

> you have asked me about my daily programme. The fact of the matter is that I draw inspiration only from two items —repeating God's name and spinning the whole day. All the rest, including study, writing, discussions and speeches, appear to me to be insignificant as a zero. In essence, God's remembrance and spinning are almost identical to me. If zeros are added to one, they go on adding strength; but without the one, all remain merely zeros. I, therefore, take care of the one, i.e., daily prayers and spinning.

Writing to Radhakrishna Bajaj in October 1936, Vinoba remarked :

> My mind is full of *takli* these days. At present I feel almost like a child. I, therefeore, like small things. Just as a child likes small utensils, small bread and small sweets. I also feel attracted towards small items. I have with me a small *Gitá*, and a small *takli*. I also require a small *dhunki*—carding apparatus.

At the instance of Jamnalalji, Vinoba also spent some time in revising *Gitai*, the Marathi translation of the *Gita*. Accordingly, three or four editions of the *Gitai* were published by the Gramseva Mandal and Vinoba made several alteration in each

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

edition. Jamnalalji also requested Vinoba to edit the manuscript of his discourses on the *Gita* given in Dhulia jail. *Gitai Pravachan* was first printed in the original Marathi and subsequently translated into Hindi and other Indian languages.

In course of time, a *saranjam karyalaya*—workshop—for the fabrication of *taklis* and *charkhas* was also set up near Wardha Ashram. Writing about this workshop to a colleague in October 1936 Vinoba said :

> Ordinarily I like small schemes. But you want to invest Rs. 10,000 for the *saranjam karyalaya*. In proportion to the village work involved, this scheme will be considered as small. But I do not relish the idea of receiving donations from some people and giving their names to the institution. I do not like this system at all. We should write only God's name and not of human beings in our sacred work. Leading names of persons to our institutions would amount to some kind of an idol worship. I have, therefore, no inclination towards such a practice. Gramseva Mandal should also not advance loans to people, with interest or without interest.

In another letter, Vinoba expressed his definite view that "constructive work will not make any headway until some intellectuals engaged themselves in physical labour out of their own free will". In regard to weaving, he mentioned the following points :

(i) We should prepare the best possible slivers and make them freely available to those villagers who desire to learn spinning.

(ii) At least half a dozen workers should be engaged in spinning at one place, so that similar community-spinning could be organized in the rural areas. Continuous experiments should be conducted in spinning, carding and weaving in all our centres.

(iii) Now workers should be trained every year for expanding our work.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

(iv) The quality of khadi produced by us should be of the highest order.

(v) There should be an atmosphere of constant research and study around me in the Ashram. In the absence of such an atmosphere, I cannot carry on my daily-activities.

A dairy was also started both for the supply of milk as well as for conducting experiments in feeding, weeding and breeding. In the initial stages, both buffaloes and Shahiwal breed of cows were maintained, and later, only cows and that also of the local *goalau* breed. With better feeding and servicing by pedigree bulls, it was found possible to upgrade the local breed both for milk-yield as well as supply of bullocks. A *Goras Bhandar*—Co-operative Store—was established in Wardha city for collecting and distributing cow's milk to the public.

A tannery for preparing shoes, *chappals* and other leather goods out of the skins and hides of unslaughtered cattle was set up near Nalwadi under the direction of Gopalrao Valunjkar in 1937. Gandhiji had blessed this scheme because it involved the creation of wealth out of waste in the villages. In fact, all the constructive wokers in Wardha used the foot-wears produced in this tannery, because the leather employed in the tannery was 'non-violent'—it did not involve any slaughter of cattle. This tannery is now running under the supervision of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission.

Manohar Divan, while doing village work under the Gramseva Mandal, also started the service of those who suffered from leprosy. In the initial stages, the members of the Gramseva Mandal raised objections against leprosy work, specially after the devastating floods at Pavnar and the nearby villages in 1934. But Vinoba fully supported this activity and allowed Manohar Divan to carry it on as a member of the Gramseva Mandal. "In fact we should feel proud that one of our workers has undertaken this difficult work at grave risk to his own health," remarked Vinoba. Manoharji started a separate *Mahagori Seva Mandal* in May 1936 at Dattapur on the other side of the Wardha-Nagpur road, about two miles away from Nalwadi. He

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

worked as the director of this leper-colony for about twenty-five years with single-minded devotion. It is now considered to be one of the finest institutions in the sphere of leprosy control. Here the patients work in the fields to grow crops and vegetables, manufacture their own khadi, run a dairy, repair and construct their own houses. So far as I know, this is the only leprosy instiution in India which is run on the basis of self-reliance through productive work.

Both the tannery as well as the Dattapur leper colony were run, more or less, as autonomous institutions under the overall guinence and supervision of the Gramseva Mandal. Throuh them, commendable work has been done all these years. Gandiji kept in close touch with their progress from year to year because he attached great importance to these constructive activities. When he visited Dattapur in the early 40s, I happened to accompany him. After going round the institution, Gandhiji wrote in the visitors' book : "I am known as a Mahatma by the people; but the real Mahatma is Manohar Diwan who has sacrificed his whole life for the cause of leprosy at grave risks to his own health."

After the 1932 satyagraha, the Government kept Vinoba's Ashram sealed for about a year. Even when the buildings were released by the authorities, Vinoba did not like to re-start the Asharam in its old form. After careful consideration, it was transformed into Gramseva Mandal for doing intensive village work, and its buildings were made available to *Mahila Ashram*, a women's institution of an all-India nature where the wives, sister and daughters of political and constructive workers received education under the direction of Gandhiji and Vinoba.

Earlier, a *Kanya Shala*—Girls' school—had—had been started on an *ad hoc* basis in the staff quarters of the adjoining High School. This was mainly for the daughters of various workers engaged in eduational and constructive work. After closure, girl-students of the Sabarmati Ashram were also sent to this Kanya Shala, later called *Ashram* at Wardha. Important

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

national leaders visited the institution from time to time. It was from here that Gandiji commenced his historic Harijan tour on 7 November 1933. It was subsequently merged into the Mahila Ashram. Even while living in Nalwadi for conducting the Gramseva Mandal activities, Vinoba used to take classes in the Mahila Ashram and join the evening prayers. It was mainly due to Vinoba's active interest in this institution that it soon grew into a first-rate educational campus for girls as well as adult women. It was a purely residential institution and students from almost all the States of India were attracted towards it. A large number of girls from Nepal also joined it due to the efforts of Tulsi Mehr, a Nepalese constructive worker who had lived in the Sabarmati Ashram in the early twenties. Mahila Ashram has been responsible for training up a good number of women workers on Gandhian lines, and they are still working in different States with excellent achievements to their credit.

Vinoba and his colleagues were also placed in change of a boys' high school which was run by Jamnalalji and Jajuji. It was formerly known as Marwadi Vidyalaya were Gandhiji, after the Nagpur Congress Session of 1920, first asked the staff and students to sever all connections with Government in regard to recognition and degrees. In 1926 this Vidyalaya was converted into a '*Rastriya Vidya Mandir*', with independent courses of study on national lines. Many students and teachers naturally left it, and only about 25 students, including Kamalnayan Bajaj, Dattoba Dastane, Kunder Diwan, Bhanu Panse, Budhsen and Kishan Jaju, continued to pursue their studies here. The curriculum included the study of Marathi, Sanskrit, Hindi and English besides a general knowledge of economics, politics and sociology. Special emphasis was laid on the study of the *Gita*, *Ramayana*, and the *Upanishads*. The Marathi *Bhajans* of Tukaram, Jnanadev formed in important part of the syllabus. The Vidyalaya had to be closed down during the Satyagraha of 1930. It reopened for some time after the Gandhi-Irwin Pact, but was finally would up in 1932.

The main criticism against the Wardha Satyagrah Ashram

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

had been that it was cut off from the mainstream of public life and tended to become some sort of an island, isolated from the people. The Gramseva Mandal, therefore, was organized on an entirely different basis, and its chief aim was to forge living links with the rural population on the foundation of self-reliance and co-operation. These basic objectives of the Mandal have been attained over the years with notable success. The workshop at Gopuri, manufacturing traditional and Ambar charkhas along with the accessories, is one of the biggest in the country today and is run in an efficient manner. Its management is in the hands of an executive committe which adopts various resolutions on the basis of unanimity and not by majority vote. For many years it experimented with yarn currency for its transactions in place of metallic or paper currency. The workers obtained a variety of consumer goods from the *Swarajya Bhandar*—co-operative stores—by paying for them in hanks of self-spun yarn. This was, indeed, a novel experiment which worked for several years with fairly satisfactory results. I happened to be the Convener of the Advisory Committee for this scheme which was inaugrated by Mahatma Gandhi himself in March 1942.

As an integral part of the Gramseva Mandal's programme, Vinoba used to organize every year a *Khadi-yatra* in one of the work-centres of Wardha Taluka. This was in the nature of an annual conference of constructive workers engaged in khadi and other allied activities. I remember how I met Vinoba for the first time in April 1936 at Pavnar where a *Khadi-yatra* was in session. On my way from Nagpur to Wardha by road, Jamnalalji desired that I should halt for a few hours at Pavnar to attend the conference and also pay my respects to Vinoba. Frankly, I had not heard of Vinoba's name earlier, although he was held in very high esteem in the Gandhian circles.

Meetings held at the *Khadi-yatra* were largely attended by the villagers of the neighbouring areas. The session lasted two days, and besides speeches, there were competitions for spinning and weaving and prizes were awareded to the winners in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the form of spinning wheels and other equipment. An exhibition of khadi and village industries was also organized on this occasion. At these meetings the workers related their experiences of constructive work in different villages and discussed various problems in order to find practical solutions. These *Khadi-yatras* continued till 1941 and served a definite purpose. They were helpful in generating an atmoshere of self-sufficiency and dignity of labour amongst the rural population. The workers looked forward to these annual meetings because they provided an opportunity of enriching their own programme in the countryside.

From letters written by Vinoba to important constructive workers, it is evident that he supervised various activities which an eye on efficiency and correct idealism. In one of the letters he complains about the lack of sanitation in the dairy at Nalwadi. In another communication, he expresses his disapproval of the introduction of piece-work in the workshop and rules out a proposal to allow the workers to complete their assignments at home. Such a system, he fears, may tempt the workers to get a portion of their work done through others in the from of a sub-contract, resulting in economic exploitation.

To be able to spin on the *takli* for eight hours without any intervals of rest, Vinoba practised spinning alternatley with both the hands. When the right hand was tired, he would spin with the left and *vice versa*. Sometime later at Pavnar, he introduced *Tunai*—hand-carding. This reduced the need for a carding machine and provided gainful work to the unemployed. The slivers prepared out of this hand-carded cotton were found to be quite satisfactory.

Vinoba laid considerable stress on the quality of workers and not their numbers. He believed in conducting experiments in depth and hesitated to plan in terms of quantities. Writing to my wife on 2 February 1936, he observed : "By serving even a few individuals in a thorough manner, the impact of our work would be visible on the whole village. I have, therefore, prepared a new sutra—aphorism : *'Seva Vyaktikee, Bhakti*

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Samashtikee'—'service of the individual and devotion to the community'.

In regard to the teaching of languages in the Satyagrah Ashram or later at Nalwadi, Vinoba's main emphasis was on learning one language thoroughly—its grammar, diction, pronunciation and usage. He has been of the definit opinion that if a student learns one language in a thorough manner, it will be possible for him to pick up other languages quite easily. Vinoba would commence the teaching of Sanskrit with the *Gita*; English he would start with the Bible, and Marathi with *Jnaneshwari* and the *bhajans* of Tukaram.

Vinoba was particularly keen on regularity in studies. One may study only for an hour, but this must be repeated everyday systematically. In another letter addressed to my wife on 16 January 1936, he wrote : "Just as a house gets dirty if it is not cleaned every day, so self-study gets diffused if not undertaken regularly. We should constantly recollect what had been taught earlier I continue to reflect even today what I had studied 15 or 20 years ago".

Vinoba always welcomed constructive criticism of his activities in the Ashram or the Gramseva Mandal. In a letter to a worker on 29 August 1935, he observed : "It is good that you could hear some criticism of the Ashram. If the Ashram is really sacred, its critics are bound to attain salvation. Devotion to a duty other than yours is a kind of *bhakti*. These days, a number of workers are becoming some kind of atheists. I regard such atheism not as a proof of the non-existence of God, but a vindication of His benevolence... Even Lord Vishnu has been depicted as sleeping on the multitudinous heads of a serpent, devoid of all worries."

While Vinoba was engaged in all these constructive and educational activities from dawn to dusk with a sense of exceptional dedication his inherent aspiration was to reduce himself to a zero in the service of the Divine. When teaching *Ramayana* to his students, he would remark. "I say to myself,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

what role is there for me in this *Ramayana*? The example of Ahilva turning herself into a stone suggests itself to me. I should be blessed, thrice blessed, if I were to become such a stone.''

Gandhiji looked upon Vinoba both as his son as well as a *Guru*. He was all praise for him and expressed his inner sentiments to his colleagues from time to time. Bapu addressed him as *Kritayugi* Vinoba in a letter written on 19 September 1932 from the *Yervada* jail. *Kritayuga* literally means 'the golden age', and Gandiji used the epithet for Vinoba because he was engaged in selfless activities in the service of the Divine. Gandhiji's letter with wit and humour of a rare kind, and is reproduced below :

Yeravda Jail.
September 19, 1932

Kritayugi Vinoba,

We need not envy you for living in the *Kritayuga*, for we too, have with us the *Kritayugi* Sardar* and, therefore, rise at least a few inches higher than you. Do you know that the Sardar keeps wallking most of the time? He would, if he could, even eat walking and spin walking. Even though an old mad, he tries to learn the *Gita* by heart while walking. For improving his pronunciation he should be sent to you, and you given a cane to correct him. But you are not likely to have that good fortune in the immediate future.

You seem to have mastered the art of holding out false assurances to the poor ! When a poor man like me had been pining for a letter from you, you did not write at all; and now when I am getting ready to lie down on my deathbed, you write to say, 'now that I have started writing, I shall write regularly'. But may be I am destined to survive this ordeal,**

*Sardar Vallabhabhai Patel.

** Mahatma Gandhi has started a fast unto death as a protest against British Prime Minister's proposal for introducing separate electorates for Harijans.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

since the vows of *Kritayugis* are not known to remain unfulfilled. If I do leave this bed, I will expect to hear regularly from you.

Through this bit of jestings, I have diverted my mind for a while from the letters I have been writing on serious matters and, also suggested that your activities call for no critism. Keep me informed about th m.

If I come out unscathed in body and soul through this ordeal and if there is something to write about, I shall write to you. will preserve your letter.

—Bapu's blessings

While undertaking the historic march to Dandiin March 1930 in connection with Salt Satyagraha, Gandhiji had announced his his decision not to return to the Sabarmati Ashram till *Swaraj* was achieved. The Ashram was, accordingly, converted into a Harijan educational institution. Even when Gandhiji came to Ahmedabad after the end of the movement, he stayed for a while at Gujarat Vidyapith, and not at Sabarmati Jamnalal Bajaj took this opportunity of inviting the Mahatma to make Wardha his permanent headquarters. In consequence, Gandhiji used to go to Wardha quite often and stayed in the Prayer-hall at Mahila Ashram and later at Maganwadi, the headquarters of the All-India Village Industries Association. It was on 30 April 1936 that Gandhiji walked down to Sevagram village, four miles from Wardha, to settle down there. I had the rare opportunity of walking with him to Sevagram—Segaon, as it was originally called, on that day during hot summer. Initially, Jamnalalji constructed only one hut which is now known as *Adi Niwas*. Gradually, the Sevagram Ashram developed into a fairly big colony.

Even when Gandhiji shiftrd to Sevagram, his meetings with Vinoba were none too frequent. Bapu did not like to distract Vinoba's attention from the basic activities of rural development and education. Vinoba also went to Sevagram only when specifical asked to do so.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Early in 1938, Vinoba's health deteriorated considerably, causing anxiety to Jamnalalji and Gandhiji. This was due to a very rigorous life led by Vinoba, and that too on a deficient diet, and also the flow of dust towards the Ashram raised by trucks and buses plying on the Nagpur road, very near the village.

Vinoba was advised by Bapu to go to a hill-station for rest and convalescence. Vinoba agreed to consider the matter. He one day went to Pavnar, a village on the Nagpur road, about six miles from Wardha. Jamnalal Bajaj had constructed a villa on the bank of river Dham for occasional rest. Vinoba liked this place and informed Gandhiji that he had selected a 'hill station' for himself. Shortly afterwards, he shifted to Pavnar and gradully started another Ashram there. He called this new institution *Paramdham*, because it was situated on the other bank of Dham river. Incidentally, *Paramdham* also connotes the abode of the Divine.

At Pavnar, Vinoba used his own 'pathy' to regain normal health. He worked hard for several hours a day in the adjoining fields which were full of relics of the capital city of Pavan kingdom which existed in this area more than 1500 years ago. He would prepare butter out of groundnuts and eat plenty of vegetables grown in the Ashram. Vinoba increased the intake of milk as well. As a result, his weight steadily increased from 90 lbs. to 120 lbs. within six months. Asked by a friend about the secret of this new 'pathy', Vinoba explained : "I surrendered all worries to the will of the Providence. I did not keep any books with me except the poems of some Marathi saints. I did not read any serious books; nor did I think of any complicated problem."

It was during this period that Vinoba virtually withdrew himself and led a sequestered life. When I was the Principal of Navabharat Vidyalaya at Wardha, I went to Pavnar once or twice with a few colleagues of mine to pay respects to Vinoba. As he noticed us, Vinoba turned his back and continued spinning. At first, we were shocked at this behaviour on his part and felt rather insulted. But we soon realized that this was nothing

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

extraordinary because Vinoba did not like to meet even distinguished guests those days.

Once, while at Sevagram, Gandhiji asked Acharya Kripalani to meet Vinoba at Pavnar and discuss with him certain problems. When Kripalani approached him and gently called his name. Vinoba made no reply and did not even turn round to greet him. Kripalani thought that Vinoba was saying his prayers and, therefore, waited patiently for some time. He made another attempt, but without success. The third attempt after about half an hour also failed to yield any results. Acharya Kripalani, therefore, felt slighted and reported his experience to Bapu, protesting against the 'rude demeanour' of his favourite disciple : "I have never met a more arrogant person than your Vinoba', exploded Kripalani. Gandhiji sympathized with him and explained : "It is not arrogance, professor; it is concentration which is the hallmark of spiritual endeavour."

It was also at Pavnar that Vinoba sought the assistance of a Muslim scholar to learn Arabic in order to study the Holy Quran in the original. Subsequently, Vinoba prepared a book of selections from the Quran and published it under the title *The Essence of the Qaran*. Hindi, Urdu and English editions of this collection were brought out by the Sarva Seva Sangh. They were very useful in acquainting constructive workers with the basic principles of Quran and removing a number of misconceptions about the Isamic religon.

Jamnalalji had often expressed a desire to raise a temple in the memory of Bharat, brother of King Rama, who had functioned as a noble trustee of the Kingdom during Ramachandra's absence. Vinoba also supported the idea of erecting a temple in Bharat's name. Once, when he was digging the fields, his pick-axe hit a hard stone, creating loud noise. When the stone was extracted with great difficulty, Vinoba discovered that it was an artistic statue of Bharat embracing Rama Sita and Lakshman standing by their side. The statue was cleaned with devotion and installed in the Ashram campus. Vinoba used

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

to walk round the statue several times after his bath every morning and recited *shlokas* from the *Ramayana* in a loud and resounding voice. After some time, a small roof was erected above the statue to protect it against sun and rains. Later, the Gramseva Mandal raised a regular 'Bharat-Ram temple' which is now one of the special feature of Paramdham Ashram at Pavnar and visitors invariably go there to offer prayers.

Some years later, Vinoba used to go regularly to a neighbouring village Surgaon, about three miles away from Pavnar. He carried his own shovel on the shoulders and cleaned various parts of Surgaon every morning without fail. According to the traditional habit of the village-folk, they eased themselves on the outskirts of the habitation, without even caring to drop earth on the nightsoil for hygienic reasons. Vinoba did scavenging work in a systematic manner for years on end. In course of time, the local Panchayat agreed to construct a few public latrines for women. But the general habit of villagers continued despite Vinoba's exemplary preseverance. On his way to Surgaon and back, he would recite various *bhajans* from Marathi saints with full abandon. Vinoba would take his bath before proceeding to Surgaon, and again on return, go to the Bharat-Ram temple and spend about half an hour in singing Marathi poems and reciting Sanskrit verses.

Vinoba often explained to his colleagues and pupils 'the romance of the zero'. "The zero when multiplied with the biggest number, reduces it to a zero, and when dividing even a small figure raises it to infinity. This is the exceptional beauty and miracle of a zero. If it is taken away from mathematics, the whole romance of this science would fade away."

It was also at Pavnar that Vinoba initiated his memorable experiment of eschewing money economy of *kanchan-mukti*, as he called it. He took a strict decision to eliminate the use of coins or currency for running his Ashram. Steps were, therefore, taken to produce all the foodgrains and vegetables required by the inmates for their own consumption. A small dairy was

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

also started. Khadi was, of coure, spun and woven within the campus for clothing purposes. A printing press was set up to enbale the inmates to earn some money as a special case for meeting expenses on travel, postage, salt and kerosene. In order to provide irrigation for the fields, Vinoba started digging a well. Students from several educational institutions of Wardh went to Pavnar to participate in this *shramdan*—contribution of voluntary labour. Vinoba agreed to receive donations in terms of labour, but not in money. Instead of using the bullock power, he and his co-workers turned the Persian wheel on the Ashram well and recited the evening prayers simultaneously. This was a practical implentation of the dictum 'work is worship'. I had also the privilege of joining these work-oriented evening prayers several times at Pavnar. It was at one of these special prayers that Jayaprakash Narayan felt greatly attracted towards Vinoba's dynamic personality.

Vinoba also commenced at Pavnar a new experiment of 'God-realization' through a *Brahma-vidya Mandir*, consisting exclusively of unmarried girl-students drawn from different parts of the country. Vinoba has often remarked that this institution will, perhaps, be his last activity. The inmated of the *Mandir* lead a life of self-sufficiency by producing all their requirements locally with their own labour without the assistance of any servants. They also spend several hours a day on self-study of religious books, including the *Gita* and the *Upanishads*. Vinoba believes that the knowledge of the Supreme through bread-labour and self-reliance could be attained more easily by women rather than men.

Although Vinoba has not been able to live at Pavnar for years, he keeps on writing to the inmates quite regularly, conveying his instructions on different aspects of life. His younger bother Balkoba now stays at Pavnar for six months in a year to look after the institution; the remaining six months are spent at the Urlikanchan Nature Cure Clinic near Poona.

After the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi, a portion of his ashes were immersed in the Dham river at Pavnar. Since then,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

a Gandhi Fair is held here each year on 12 February. The inmates of the Paramdham Ashram manage this annual *Mela* and arrange some talks for educating the people in the basic principles of *Sarvodaya*.

"In the troubled but dynamic scene that is India today," observed Pandit Nehru in a message to the Savodaya Conference, "the frail figure of Vinobaji stands like a rock of strength, modest and gentle, yet with something of the vision of the future in his eyes." "It is not for us, smaller folk, to judge him whether we agreed with him or disagreed in some matter, for he is above these minor judgements. He represents, as none else does, the spirit and tradition of Gandhiji and of India."

On the occasion of Vinoba's 68th birthday celebrations in New Delhi, Nehru said : "It is the good luck of the present generation that we have a person of Vinobaji's stature in our midst. In fact, no one in the wide word today could be likened to him. His way of life brings to one's mind the values which Gandhiji stood for Acharya Vinoba is uniquely Indian, and yet he possesses a keen insight into contemporary tends. He is like a beacon showing us the right path and correcting us whenever we go wrong."

It was in early November 1941—three months before his passing away—that Jamnalal Bajaj, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi's 'fifth son', observed a week's fast on the occasion of his own birthday at Paramdham Ashram, Pavnar. On the last day of the fast, he told me with conviction : "I regard Vinoba as a great *Rishi* in line with the Indian tradition. We may not realize this today but history will reckon him as an eminent *Rishi*, equal to any of the *Rishis* who sanctified this land in the past."

The unique personality of Vinoba is a rare synthesis of profound knowledge, deep devotion and sustained action. While his scholarship in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and other Sanskrit scriptures is almost matchless, and his knowledge of more than sixteen Indian and European languages is phenomenal, Vinoba

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

possesses a loving, compassionate and devout heart which invariably makes a noticeable impact on the people. Besides, he has travelled on foot for more than thirteen years in different parts of India, covering a total distance of 36,500 miles—more than the circumference of the earth. During this *Padayatra*, he collected 4.4 million acres of land as free gifts from the poor, middle-class and richer peasants, out of which about 1.3 million acres have already been distributed among landless farm workers. Although these figures are yet far below the targets, there is no gainsaying that Vinoba has done what legislative measures in all the States of India have failed to do during the last two decades of freedom. Vinoba has also received 1.6 lakh out of 5.6 lakh villages in India as Gramdans, more especially in Bihar and Orissa. All this has been achieved almost single-handed, without any direct assistance from the Government. There are, however, over 10,000 active Sarvodaya workers who have dedicated themselves to this movement with faith and resolution. It is this exceptional combination of *Gyana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* which raises Vinoba's personality to dizzy heights of spiritual distinction.

While Vinoba is a rare gem in the line of ancient *Rishis*, his passion for science and mathematics is unrivalled. The sweep of his vision covers a wide spectrum ranging from the hoary cultural heritage to the shape of things to come centuries later. To him, "science is a great force which is neither moral nor immoral". "It is for spirituality to guide science in the right direction." For example, Vinoba would like science to make it possible for every village to have its own atomic reactor for running the industries. "A little knowledge of science has led to centralization of industry, a fuller knowledge should make for its decentralization in the countryside." As science progresses, man's life should become simpler and more natural. In fine, science wedded to spirituality should open out vistas beyond human imagination. In Vinoba's view, the age of politics and religion is fast dying out; the age of science and spirituality is fast dawning on the world. "There is much common good in all the religions of the world, but there is plenty of dross as well—formalism, dogma and ritualism. This dross is

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

now dying out and spirituality which is the common essence of all faiths would prevail." Declares Vinoba : "Our earth would turn into a paradise only if the two forces of science and self-knowledge unite and co-operate with each other. The outer light of science must be complemented by the inner light of spirituality. Science has enlarged the frontiers of human intelligence, but the heart has not been able to keep pace with the development of the head. We have to transform human life and build a new '*Vishvamanava*'—the universal man."

Viwed in this light, Vinoba's Bhoodan-Gramdan movement should not be judged, by mere statistics; that is the least part of it. As Pandit Nehru remarked, "what is really important is not the actual acreage of land obtained, but the new spirit infused into the minds of the people." Vinoba himsef explains : "The land which is given does not matter much in itself. It is only a taken of love and compassion. When land is given there is a change both in the donor as well as the receiver. It is this spiritual transformation which is of the essence. The movement aims at creating a new man.....The earth is the peasant's mothar. I give milk to the breast of the mother."

Vinoba also cherishes unwavering faith in the future of democracy in the world : "Its future is not bleak, but bright." But he does not believe in the concept of 'government by majority'. Instead, he swears by the ideal of 'government by all'. He illustrates : "There was a time when minority ruled over majority. As a reaction, there emerged an ideology of majority rule over the minority. If the first was a thesis, the second is an antithesis. It is now time for a synthesis of governement by all" Vinoba desires that decisions on public affairs should be taken unanimously or through a consensus. Only such decisions are likely to stand the test of time and carry faith and conviction to the people. The quintessence of Gramdan is precisely this process of unanimity. It should, therefore, lead to *Gram Swaraj*—self-government of the village—on the lines of a compact family where majority vote is out of place.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

This is not a utopian ideal. The functioning of the Sarva Seva Sangh on the basis of consensus over the last two decades has been yielding good results. The experiment of distributing Bhoodan lands by the unanimous opinion of the village community has also been a great success. In fact, nothing much is lost by some delay due to differences of opinion. The ultimate solution reached through a consensus is implemented without delay and amply compensates for earlier loss of time.

Though Vinoba is averse to the organization of political parties under a democratic system, he would not rule out their existence altogether. He basic objection is not so much to organizing political parties as to the smothering of conscience by party members : "Today the parties rule not in people's interest but in their own interest. We should be the servants of the pople and not of the parties. The future belongs not to the party system of Government but to a bettet type of democracy, namely, governement without parties. At any rate, even if the parties exist, there should be no rigid enforcement of 'whips' on issues which involve fundamental principles." Vinoba states : "In the present context, while there may still be the ruling and the opposition parties, there should also develop a strong force of non-partisans. They should influence and exert moral pressure on both the ruling party as well as the opposition. By itself, the opposition cannot serve as a corrective to the ruling party, because it also seeks power which is essentially a corrupting force. The real corrective could come only from an incorruptible body of constructive workers who do not seek any power and believe only in moral force."

Vinoba has also been talking in terms of a 'third power' which is different from the two existing powers of violence and State coercion : "We should be able to develop an independent *Lak-shakti*—power of the people—which is free from the coercive power of the State and is opposed to the power of violence. Instead of depending on legislation enacted by a majority vote in Parliament or State Legislatures, our work should essentially rest on the service of the people and the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

power which is generated from such selfless service." Vinoba adds : "I do not belong to any politcal party; nor am I a member or office-bearer of any social or cultural organizatson. I fervently believe in the efficacy of the 'third force, which is entirely different from the two forces of *Himsa*—violence—and *Danda-shakti*—legislative power of punishment."

In order to make this, 'third force' universal, the Sarvodaya workers must not align themselves with any group or organization. On the contrary, they should identify themselves with the people and work as the servants of humanity : "The motto adopted by the majority is 'service' through power'. Another group thinks of power through service'. The Sarvodaya group believes in the abolition of power through service". Adds Vinoba : "This is real '*Lok niti*'—the politics of the people—as opposed to '*Raj-niti*'—the politics of power."

This politics of *Lok-ntti* is not a negative concept : "It does not confine itself to exposing the faults of the current politics of power. Although the present political system may not be a genuine government by the people, it is certainly government by consent. To change the system we must change the people. It would, therefore, be sheer waste of energy to spend our time in finding fault with others. Since our aim is to build up a new kind of politics, we should keep ourselves aloof from traditional politics. If the people become conscious of tLeir own inner strength, they will be able to solve most of their problems by themselves".

Vinoba has often mentioned about the cult of '*they-ism*' : "Various *isms* are being talked about in the world, such as communism, facism, socialism or welfare-ism. But, in fact, there is only one *ism* which is really current—it is '*they-ism*', signifying 'they will do for us'. We think we cannot better our own lot, and that it is only for the State to do so. Unless we free ourselves from this '*they-ism*', we shall never be happy. The Gramdan villages must build up the power of people from the very bottom so that they work together with common agreement for their own well-being."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In all his constructive activities, Vinoba keeps before himself the vision of 'one world' : Although the globe has been shrinking geographically owing to jet-speed travel at a very fast pace, gaps between the minds and hearts of different nations, and groups within nations, have tended to increase. Says Vinoba : "The saints who had the vision of one world had not travelled beyond the area of a modern district in India. Even the travels of the Buddha did not extend beyond five or six districts. It is, therefore, not necessary for us to cover large distances of becoming broad-minded. We should try to get rid of the ego, reducing ourselve to a zero. The result would be much more valuable than trotting all over the globe." Today, caste, religion, language and regional loyalties divide man from man. These forces of disintegration could be countered effectively only by the spirit of brotherhood and one human family.

With a view to realizing this essential unity, Vinoba has been experimenting with the power of '*Sukshma*'—subtle, spiritual power—during the past few years. As a result, he has reduced his physical movements to the minimum and does not bind himself to any programme for more than seven days at a time. He has also decided not to deliver public speeches any more. He humorously observes : "Heneceforward, I would pursue only 'private practice'—personal conversation with an individual or a group." While Vinoba is always happy to read letters received from numerous Sarvodaya workers, he does not send them replies over his own signatures; they are acknowledged by his personal staff. Vinoba has recently started observing long spells of silence at his Ashram in Pavnar. He spends several hours on hard physical work in digging land or collecting pebbles from the fields, but does not like to talk to the inmates or the visitors. When I asked him some time ago about the results of his '*Sukshma*' experiments, Vinoba remarked : "I am still igniting the hearth. The process of cooking is yet to begin. It would take quite some time before I actually serve the meals."

Like the *Rishis* of yore, Vinoba has already established a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

chain of Ashrams all over India. Apart from the *Brahma Vidya Mandir* at Pavnar, there is a *Maitri Ashram* in North Lakhimpur district of Assam. Looking from the borders of India towards China, Burma and Pakistan, this institution, as its name indicates, is intended to work for friendship at all levels inside and outside the country. The *Samanvaya Ashram* in Bodh Gaya, Bihar, which is within a stone's throw of the famous temple of the Buddha, aims to achieve the ideal of synthesis between the philosophy of the *Upanishads* and the teachings of the Buddha. *Vishwa-Needam* is an International Sarvodaya Centre, six miles from Bangalore city. Spread over an area of 300 acres, it has been trying various experiments on Sarvodaya lines over the past ten years. *Prasthan Ashram* near Pathankot, not far from the conjuction of the borders of India, Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan, may develop as an ideal Centre for promoting communal harmony and national integration. *Visarjan Ashram*, on the outskirts of the city of Indore, has been carrying on different constructive activities with a view to evolving new values in society, after discarding the out-dated ones.

It is, however, not individual *Sadhana* to which Vinoba attaches much importance. Such individual penances has been practised by many sages and hermits in the past. In Vinoba's view, science now demands that we should take to *Samuhik Sadhana*—collective spiritual effort. Such *Sadhana* may ultimately lead to some kind of a new satygraha even in the international field for spreading peace and goodwill in the world. As Vinoba explained to some foreign friends, the quintessence of Sarvodaya, which includes satyagraha, is the 'art of living for others'.

Vinoba's ideas on nuclear weapons have an originality of their own. In his opinion, "nuclear weapons have thrown a challenge before mankind : either accept non-violence or face extinction of the human race." "The two ends of a circle are very near to each other: they are non-violence and nuclear arms." In the course of his message to the World Anti-nuclear Arms Convention held in New Delhi in June 1962. Vinoba observed : "Nuclear weapons should, of course, be abolished.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

But the conventional weapons appear to be no less frightening. The nuclear arms tend to bring us nearer to non-violence because they impel man to think and ponder. But pistols and daggers push non-violence far away. These weapons appears to be small, but they are the parent of nuclear arms.

Addressing a post-prayer meeting at Gangad in Gujarat in 1958, Pandit Nehru had remarked : "The mission of Vinobaji, one of the great sons of the soil, presents a distinct picture in the world which is witnessing terrible stockpiles of nuclear weapons. Man is being crushed under the weight of armaments. Here in India, Vinobaji is going round the country conveying the message of peace to millions of our people. These are two pictures before us. In essence they are symbolic of the two forces of violence and non-violence. I hope the forces of non-violence and peace, harmony and unity will triumph over those of destruction."

As indicated earlier, Vinoba has been busy during recent years in spreading an atmoshere of *Sarva-Dharma Samabhava* in India and outside. Religion, like many other good things of life, covers a multitude of sins as well. It is, therefore, imperative to rid it of the non-essential rites and rituals and highlight the common ideals which constitute real spirituality. Vinoba has spent considerable time in selecting 'core' verses from the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*, from the writings of Adi Shankaracharya, and from the saint poets of Maharashtra, including Tukaram, Jnanadev and Eknath. He has also published selections from the *Quran* and the *Bible*. A re-arranged edition of *Dhammapada*—the essence of Buddhism—was brought out earlier. *Namghosa-sar*, a selection from the Assamese poet-saint Shankerdeva, was published during Vinoba's *Padayatra* in Assam. Even at present, he devotes several hours every day to the detailed study of four *Vedas* which he regards as the most ancient available literature of the highest quality in the world. When I met Vinoba last time in Wardha, I was astonished to find that he was busy ticking off those English words from the Oxford dictionary which could be easily absorbed in our national language, Hindi. He is planning to

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

publish a dictionary of such words in Devnagri script, arranged according to the sequence of Nagari alphabet. All this original study and research has been conducted by Vinoba single-handed during the Bhoodan tours in different parts of the country. The same work, if entrusted to the Government or a professional research institution, would have easily cost several lakhs of rupees, even though of a much inferior quality.

"All activities throughout my life," says Vinoba, "have been motivated by the sole purpose of achieving the union of hearts." These publications on different religions have been inspired by the same thought : "Science has made the world smaller. It seeks to bring human beings closer to one another. It would, therefore, be improper for the human society to be divided into sects and creeds, each considering itself superior to the other. We must try to understand each other properly and imbibe in ourselves the virtues of one another."

Apart from there religious and spiritual pursuits, Vinoba also devotes serious thought to the current problems of India. During my talks on various occasions, he has mentioned a suggestion more than once that, in order to lessen mutual rivalries and recriminations, political leaders should set a healthy convention by retiring from active public life as the age of 65 years. He argues that even judges of the Supreme Court of India are obliged to retire at this age, and there is no reason whatsoever why politicians should continue to hang on to public positions after attainning the age 65. Further, Vinoba is of the definite view that Ministers of the ruling parties, on taking the oath of office, must behave as non-party leaders of the pople. Such a healthy convention already exists in the case of Speakers. This should now be extended suitably to the Ministers as well.

Vinoba poignantly feels that, after the attainment of political freedom, two basic mistakes have been committed by the national leaders. First, the Government did not pay adequate attention to the development of agriculture, particularly the provision of irrigational facilities through a large number of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

wells and tanks, for achieving self-sufficiency in food requirements. This inevitably led to the spriral of rising prices causing untold hardships to the Indian masses. Secondly, no systematic attempt was made to re-fashion the current educational system from primary to the University stages. If education had been made work-oriented on the Basic pattern, as proposed by Gandhiji, the country would not have been faced with the complex problems of student unrest and unemployment among the educated young men. Even now, merely tinkering with these questions would be futile and meaningless. They must be tackled at the highest level with a sense of emergency so that concrete steps could be taken to remedy the situation without further loss of time.

Sometime, Vinoba reveals a streak of anarchism in his thinking. He once asked me : "What will happen if all government servants are asked to proceed on leave with full pay for a year?" And, than, he analysed the situation accruing out of such a contingency : "Births and deaths will continue uninterrupted. Marriages will also take place as usual. In the absence of doctors, there will be no genuine loss to the health of the nation. On the contrary, there may be some gain, because millions of people will have an opportunity of leading a natural life, without medicines. It is not likely that t efts and dacoities would increase, because the people will organize their own local defences. There will be no unnecessary controls and restrictions on civil life and economic activities. When required, the pople will introduce their own regulations with mutual consultations." Vinoba smiled at me and asked : "Why not try this experiment for a year? Will anything be really lost in the process?"

A slmilar suggestion was made by him in regard to revamping the educational system in India after *Swaraj* : "Let all the students enjoy a holiday for six months till the educationists of the country agree upon and announce a new system. The student community will lose nothing during the interim period. Let them improve their health by playing games, climbing the mountain peaks, swimming in the rivers and going round the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

country to know her better and at closer quarters". And, then, he said with a genial smile : "Who cares for my suggestions? When a king speaks, the armies move. But when a *fakir* speaks, only the beard shakes."

In the foregoing pages, I have endeavoured to present to the reader a fairly detailed account of Vinoba's life and work over the past 75 years. Since I have had the privilege of watching his life and activities at close quarters during half this period, I have tried my best to present an intimate but a balanced review of his public work in the social, political, educational, constructive and spiritual spheres. Although Vinoba was hardly known outside India before 1940, he is now a world figure and naturally attracts the attention of numerous friends from foreign countries. As the first Satyagrahi, his name was on the lips of miilions of people all over the globe. But as the 'Walking Messiah and Saint, he is known and respected in a much wider circle of friends and admirers. Bertrand Russell, while inviting Vinoba to join the Anti-nuclear March in London in 1962, characterised him as a 'symbol of the role of conscience in human affairs'. The well-known author and novelist, Arthur Koestler, who interviewed him thrice some years ago, regards the Bhoodan movement as the greatest peace revolution since Gandhi'. He feels convinced that 'even in the twentieth century a saint in India can influence history, at least up to a point'. Ellsworth Bunker, a former American Ambassador in India, on the occasion of the Magsaysay Award for Community Leadership on Vinoba in 1958, described him as "a saint who compresses into a small body and great spirit the essence of ancient Indian tradition". He added : "Although the Bhoodan movement has developed along the dusty roads in the Indian countryside, the implications of Vinoba's phiiosophy have great potential meaning in the international scene.

Hallam Tennyson, grandson of the English poet Tennyson, who walked with Vinoba in the *Bhoodan Yatra* for several days calls his 'the embodiment of India', and remarks : "The twentieth century may be rich in jet aeroplanes, but it is pretty poor in saints. We need to remember that what we call 'progress' is

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

nothing if it leads to no corresponding inner change, and Vinoba gives us this reminder in the one way which has power to move and impress". He ends by making a very significant observation : "But with all his asceticism, Vinoba has resisted pride of poverty—that subtlest temptation of the saints. He has never urged anyone else to follow his way of life. And he goes his own way with a striking serenity. To someone who asked him if his work would succeed, he replied. 'Fire merely burns. It does not care whether anyone puts a pot on it, fills it with water and puts rice in it to make a meal. To burn is the limit of its duty". Dr. Lanza Del Vasto, the well-known Italian poet, artist and author, popularly known as Shantidas in India, has written a very readable book entitled *Gandhi to Vinoba : the new pilgrimage.* He recognizes Vinoba as 'Gandhi's spiritual successor who has made a dramatic contribution to the social economic revolution in India'.

In conclusion. I have no manner of doubt that when most of the names that figure on the front pages of newspapers these days will have been consigned to the dust-bin of history, Vinoba's life and work stand out as shinging lights that would illumine surrounding gloom and darkness for centuries to come. While the importance of his constructive work in the sphere of land rural revolution through love and compassion cannot be over-emphasized, I am convinced that Vinoba as a great educator, a remarkably original and versatile thinker, and above all, as a *Rishi* of sublime eminence, will be remembered with respect and gratitude by millions of people all the world over even when the Gramdan movement slips into comparative oblivion in the annals of India's socio-economic progress since the dawn of political freedom.

J.B. Kripalani reminsced thus : With his great erudition and Sadhana I have always considered Sri Vinoba as a great exponent of Gandhiji's philosophy and way of life. Many intellectuals consider me too as an exponent of Gandhiji's philosophy. For some time I have been wondering what it is that makes Sri Vinoba's interpretation different from mine. I have been conscious of the difference because it came out at

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

some of the annual conferences of the Sarvodaya Samaj which we both attended. Personally we had met but rarely and on these occasions there was no discussion about our respective points of view. And so when he was in U.P. touring on his "Bhoomidan" mission, I sought the earlist opportunity to meet and have a talk with him. I met him twice, once at Ghaziabad on the 12th November 1951 and again in Delhi on the 13th. I would like to share with the public the talks I had on these two occasions. Vinobaji is a man of few words and perhaps does not usually express his views on public affairs freely. I had, therefore, to do most of the talking. However, on both occasions I insisted on his speaking and giving me a bit of his mind regarding my views.

My point of view, as I placed before him, was that I believed our present ills were largely due to our pinning faith on capitalist economy. Our leaders in the Government did toy for some time with the idea of a Socialist economy but they had to abandon it, for they realised that the Administration as it was constituted today could not take up the added burden of looking after the entire production and distribution of economic goods in the country. I told Shri Vinoba that I believed that capitalism today was a decaying creed. It could no more contribute to the material, moral and cultural advancement of humanity as it had done, in some measure, in its hey-days, that is, as against medieval feudalism. Even then, after a short while, it was kept going only by the expanding markets provided by imperialism and war. The same is the case today. The chief defect from which capitalism suffers, and must suffer, is that the purchasing power of the masses is unable to keep pace with the ever-increasing production made possible through the progressive application of science and technology. Therefore, capitalism is subject to periodical depressions brought about by the low purchasing power of the masses and a glut of goods that have some times to be destroyed to keep up prices at a "remunerative" level for the capitalist. Even so, capitalist economy is kept going by war production. War and war preparations have become chronic these days. If economic life is to be put on an equalitarian basis it can be done only through a

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

co-ordinated and balanced economy. This co-ordination and balance must embrace both agriculture and industry. Gandhiji's plan of the revival and revitalisation of the villiage on the basis of regional economy, suitable to present conditions, aims at a peaceful solution of the economic problem. An alternative solution would be through Communism. But Communism could solve the economic problem only through political and economic dictatorship which, in its wake, would bring other evils. Besides, dictatorship, in the very nature of things, can be but a temporary device in an emergent situation. I cannot provide a permanent solution consistent with the modern man's urge for some freedom to regulate his own life.

I also said that in recently-freed colonial countries, with a vast population and limited acreage of land, capitalist economy in its decadent phase will not be able to solve the problem of supply of even the barest needs of the people. China, for instance, would not be able to provide for the primary needs of her population on a capitalist basis. In India a revival is possible only on the Gandhian lines of decentralisation of industry and co-ordination of agriculture with industry in the rural areas, is necessary, with the supply of cheap electric power to the village artisan. Sri Vinoba was in agreement with these views.

About politics, I said that Constructive workers had made a mistake in eschewing politics altogether. To this he said that there was a need for some individuals and groups eschewing politics and confining themselves to constructive work, for whatever the character of the Government, it will surely lag behind the progressive ideals of the reformers—be they individuals or groups. I readily accepted this proposition, but added that such individuals and groups must possess three qualifications. The first of these is that they must be active and dynamic and not be satisfied with mere routine. They must also be progressive in their outlook. The second condition is that individuals and groups that set the pace to reform and progress must realise that those who take no active steps to change the present inequitous system help to maintain that system. So far, the Constructive workers have not only

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

remained comparatively silent about the failures of the Congress Governments, but in many cases have supported the Governments. It is just like what the Christian Churches do. They remain "neutral" in politics. The result is that everywhere they help to maintain, by their silence, the inequitous *status quo*. The work of reform then falls upon people who, by their nature, are more interested in power politics than in reform. The third condition necessary for Constructive workers is to see that their work does not become something like missionary work undertaken to save their own souls and hence, indifferent to the time factor. Gandhiji worked even the Constructive Programme under a sense of urgency. If a sense of urgency was necessary then, it is much more so now because the forces of disruption and violence today are more active, more organised and more formidable. If Constructive work is carried on as if the whole eternity were before us, then the masses of people who are denied the satisfaction of their primary needs of life and who see their children dying a lingering death for want of proper nutrition, proper clothes and shelter, are likely to seek speedier methods of improving their conditions even if these methods be violent. They would then listen to every charlatan who can excite their passions.

In all these things Sri Vinoba agreed with me. Then I insisted upon his talking. He related to me the process by which he had been led to think of his present programme of land reform. He said that he had been furiously thinking how in the present state of progressive material and moral deterioration of the country he could revive hope and confidence in Bapu's way. He thought first of refugee-welfare work and came to Delhi. He and his companions for some months tried their hands at it. But as it was closely connected with official machinery they soon found that there was little scope for them to revive the people's hope and confidence in Bapu's principles through that work. And the benefit to the refugees was also next to nil. He and his friends therefore quitely retired from the field. Later, he tried to help the Government in the task of the rehabilitation of Meos. He got some success in this, though the work is being

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

prolonged and some of his workers were still working in the field. It is this double experience that made him think of something which could be undertaken outside the cramping influence of the Governmental bureaucratic machinery. And he devised his present "Bhoomidan" mission.

When I went to meet Sri Vinoba at Rajghat by appointment on the afternoon of November 13, Sri Tandon and some friends were already there and discussing Sri Vinoba's scheme of land reform—how it will work and about its possibilities. When that discussion was over the talk turned upon the moral effect of the economic and political policies of our Government on the average citizen. Sri Tandon gave his own instance. He said he never used sugar but used to take gur. But recently he had given up that too. One day on asking his servant about the price he paid for gur he was told that half a pound of gur cost four annas. This worked out at Rs. 40/- a maund. Sri Tandon therefore gave up the use of gur because he realised that he was purchasing it in the blackmarket. I said it was impossible for the average man or woman to maintain such high moral standards if social and political circumstances and, at present more especially the latter, were not favourable to their maintenance. The morals of the average citizen change with social circumstances. Only the heroic can transcend these social circumstances. I related what I had seen in one of my Ashrams a few months back. The quanti y fixed of rationed cereal was nine ounces per head. But eating with my companions, I saw that they were consuming as much as nine ounces per meal. I asked the secretary how they managed to do it. He smiled and said, "Dada, we are too poor to go to the blackmarket. But there are about a hundred inmates in the Ashram and from a quarter to half of that number are constantly out attending to Khadi work in the villages. We do not return the ration cards and draw rations for all the hundred." I was dumb-founded. This appeared to me worse than blackmarketing. And it was being done by those who had worked for the nation for the last thirty years and in the process had silently undergone untold privations. Today, while some of those who began political life with them were enjoying ministerial posts, these workers were

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

still working for the nation on a mere pittance and the value of the allowances they got was ever diminishing. That determined soldiers of the nation like these should be obliged to take recourse to such a course was morally tragic.

I related all this to Sri Vinoba. He admitted that social circumstances have a very powerful bearing on morals. I put it to him that under the circumstances which Sir Tandon and I had described it was only heroes that could stick to even the rudiments of the moral code. If even those people who had sacrificed their all to keep Constructive work going were unable to conform to the ordinary moral standards without thereby impairing their health and efficiency, and consequently, without injuring the patriotic work they were doing, there was something fundamentally wrong in our economic and political life.

I was a little surprised that Sri Vinoba accepted my analysis. I had thought that he was rather in-different to sociological considerations. He did not attach much importance to organisation. Once he had said in a Sarvodaya meeting that organisation involved violence and he was against it. He believed, instead in the reformation of the individual.

Suddenly he asked me, "What do you want? Do you want the Sarvodaya Samaj to have a political wing of its own?" I said, "Certainly, I had conceived the Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party to function as such, if the Sarvodaya Samaj would alllow it. I had on several occasions publicly stated, though without due authority, that the K.M.P.P. was the political wing of the Sarvodaya Samaj." I added, however, that if the K.M.P.P. could not be approved as such, a fresh political organisation may be set up by the Samaj itself. After all Bapu did consider the political education of the electorate as an item of Constructive work. I asked Vinobaji if he was himself not doing this when he advised people to consider the vote as a public trust and exercise it only in favour of candidates of integrity and efficiency.

Sri Vinoba gave no reply and was silent. He appeared to be deeply thinking.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In the encircling gloom, for a country in the grip helplessness, the beginning of the transformation in Telengana must mean hope, somthing to please the eye and touch the heart. The story of the transformation is little known. But something so real needs no advertisement and the newspapers and the news agencies might well be content with the story of pettiness which they unceasingly purvey. Vinoba Bhave is a man of deep humility and it would be wrong to elevate him to the pedestal which living prophets aspire to occupy. But the St. Paul of constructive work has, from his experience of Sarvodaya, devised a programme for himself, unaided by governments and little aided by anybody else. This too is something to touch the heart, because Sarvodaya has largely remained talk. Vinoba started from Wardha to Hyderabad nearly two months ago and his destination was Telengana. Nobody knew when he would return and his message to his co-workers left behind was almost a message of farewell. Telengana is the crux of the Indian problem, in its political, economic and social aspects, a problem which has been well advertised sometimes in the foreign press for the sake of spotlighting our agony of freedom and has fully advertised the failure both of the Government and the Communist. If Vinoba's march was on the lines of Dandi March, which was the prelude to the final phase of the freedom struggle, his tour of Telengana is like Gandhi's tour of Noakhali. It is a mission of mercy with the people as helpless as the Government, though Vinoba would not give his mission any pretentious name. If he chose to go on foot it was not for any display of symbolism but for reasons which reflect the truthfulness and humility of the man. It was only a night's journey from Wardha to Hyderabad and Vinoba was not boycotting the train or the plane. He wanted even swifter planes than there and if possible he would like to reach Delhi in hour. But everything had its limitations; eye-glasses, however useful they might be, would not replace the eyes. If he did not hate modern means of transport, he also could not forget the value of legs, and he preferred to walk because thereby he could not walk from village to village but visit the smaller villages. The result of the tour among the villages and the talking to the people in their own language

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Telugu, Marathi or Hindustani, all which he knows, has been a conversion, show but enduring.

The value of Vinoba's work, however, unimportant it may seem to the political worker absorbed in the fascinating game of power politics, will be understood by those who are actutely conscious of the problem that is India. Vinoba's speeches and actions explain themselves. Some of the speeches are remarkable not only for the healing touch of sympathy but for the power of insight. If Vinoba is talking ceaselessly of the land problem and village industries, it is because these are the essence of the problem of the countryside. The Telengana problem is not one of violence or non-violence but of landlessness and hunger, of the conflict between the rich landlord and the poor peasant, and of the redistribution which must be imperatively immediate. If Vinoba has chosen the method of persuasion to make the landlords donate land, and hundreds of acres are being daily donated, he has shown by his success that an element of persuasion is not unsuccessful and he has not discareded thought of legislation. The history of land legislation is present vividly in the debate over the proposed amendment of the Constitution and legislation will always have its problems. Nor is Vinoba under the illusion that he is solving the problem of Telengana. But he has substituted helplessness with self-help and hundreds and thousands of villagers are beginning to give up frustration for hope, and if that hope can help them to get rid of Government violence and Communist violence, they will see freedom in action. Impartially Vinoba has condemned all parties which have contributed to the tension in Telegana. At one place he said that the Government had deputed the police to put down the Communist menace and, instead of discharging their duties properly, the police were looting the people. To the Communist living in hide-outs in the hills because they are heaping atrocities on the people, Vinoba has a message. He admits that the life of Communists is full of sacrifice, that every individual can serve the country and that the Communists must come out openly and serve the people. At some places the people have acknowledged that they are not afraid of the Communists and more but they still want the police, unable to help themselves.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

On the problem of village economy, Vinoba has given a message which is simple and direct, without the ornamentation of theory, but it is the only alternative when the planning so far possible has not been able to bear fruit. Freedom, as he says, is not real when free India is full of foreign goods, when the cities still drain the wealth of the villages and make no contribution, when the villages, instead of maintaining their productivity, sink into despair and helplessness. No economic theory of production and distribution has been able to give any better diagnosis of the Indian crisis. Given the land he needs, the cultivator can live only by industries which he can sustain and from which he can derive benefit. But while the land has been languishing under unequal distribution, the industries have been dying from helplessness and want of help. Vinoba has not been against deriving benefit from the experience of other countries and he has referred to the new China as a country which has been involved in internal conflict for a number of years but which has saved itself from complete ruin through its cottage industries The way the villagers are helped to misuse their wealth is illustrated in the way good cotton is sent outside and bad cotton kept with them, finally leaving them to the mercy of mill cloth. Whether the political parties will relish his description of them is doubtful but he has correctly said that the Congressmen are concerned with power politics, the Socialists are obsessed with the idea of winning the elections and the Communists are thinking only in terms of violence. Communism would die a natural death unless it gave up violence and he has not denied communism its right to play a constructive role. If any message can be drawn from the work which he is doing, it is that it is not impossible to do without violence and that the ends which communism seeks to serve must be to served. No dialectic can afford to deny Vinoba's constructive effort its value; as he has said in answer to the argument that spinning is going back to the past, it does not make sense when there is acute scarcity of cloth. The tour of transformation reminds one of the great tours which Gandhi undertook in the afflicted areas of famine or disorder, preaching his gospels of work and faith and touching the hearts of a people who do not understand the slogans of the cities. "The light has gone out,' said Nehru when Gandhi died. Yet, as he

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

said, the light cannot die. It lives, however feebly, at least in Telengana where gloom is deepest.

A Great Scholar

Like his master, frail in body, he is, to use the Mahatma's own words "a treasury of knowledge." A great scholar of Sanskrit and Mahrathi, he also knows French, English, Tamil, Telegu, Gujarati and Malyalam. Most of these languages he has taught himself.

An orator of distinction, his speeches are known for precision, brevity and coherence. But despite his many talents and lifelong work in the Mahatma's Ashram, he has successfully evaded publicity.

This by itself, he considers, is an achievement. It is easier to be in the limelight, he thinks more difficult to be out of it. He follows the example of the unknown authors of the Vedas whose works live, not their names.

Only three times before has he struck the headlines, but his promience was always momentary. He became leader of the Congress national flag satyagraha in 1923 for one night—and that too accidentally. All other members of the committee sponsoring the movement were suddenly arrested. He alone remained to carry on. Next day when under his instructions the movement was to restart, he too was jailed. Coming out three months later, he went back to his cottage in Wardha.

Next year the Mahatma chose him to lead the Guruvayar Satyagraha in Kerala for Harijan temple entry. The smooth studious tenor of his life in the ashram was again shaken when the Mahatma made him the first individual satyagrahi to show India's dislike for the British Government's war policy. Only a few knew Vinoba at the time. For a day he made news and then lapsed into obscurity.

His present move is different. Now in response to an inward urge he proposes to stay on. While the Congress Government can follow Mahatma Gandhi's teachings in the mundane adminstrative sphere, Mr. Bhave proposes to counter the growing

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

public belief that any means are good enough if only they achieve the immediate end.

The Mahatma's mission in the last months of his life was to root out religious hatred. Relief and rehabilitation of refugees was necessary but not enough. They needed to be spiritually revived. Mr. Bhave hopes to pick up the broken strings of the Mahatma's efforts.

Already he has made contact with distressed Muslims who regularly come to him for guidance much in the same way as Hindus and Sikhs whom he had visited in their refugee camps to give them a word of cheer and hope asking them, at the same time to shed bitterness.

How Mr. Bhave prepared himself for his mission is a long but interesting story. He derives his spiritual leanings from his grandfather who was a learned but orthodox, Brahmin. His father, on the other hand, belonged to the school of thought popular in the last few years of the 19th century that India could be great if she revived her industries and followed the West in every respect. He failed to convince his three sons. All of them fled from home to join Mahatma Gandhi in his Ashram. All three are bachelors.

Vinoba, the eldest, was the first to leave home in 1916 without even completing his formal education. He had spent his childhood in the village Gagoda, Kolaba District of Bombay Presidency. Among his earlist political recollections are the days of the Bengal partition movement in which Tilak played a prominent part. His fiery nationalist writings were loved by the people. They aroused among them curiosity, about the past glories of the Mahratha Empire and writings of Mahratha saints and poets. They formed the beginning of Mr. Bhave's researches into Maharashtrian literature. Even as a child he read a greal deal of it.

He joined the Government High School in Baroda in 1907. A class fellow of his says : "He was always far ahead of his classmates."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Even in his school days he was known for his memory. What interests him he can commit to memory without effort. He has also developed the art of forgetting what he dislikes. "You cannot make your brain a storehouse of muck," he says. If you want to remember things you must also learn to forget, he believes.

The wave of nationalism turned Mr. Bhave's attention first to political literature, ultimately to the sources of the national revival—ancient religious books. The most important which fitted in with the times was the Gita and Mr. Bhave avidly waited for Tilak's commentary on it. Unable to buy it, he read it day by day in the local library. It helped to confirm his ideal of fighting for a righteous cause.

At about the same time, before leaving his college he had drawn upon the Upanishads.

After much mental debate, he left for Banaras in March 1916. To his father he said he was going to Bombay. Not until he had reached his destination did he disclose to him that he had made up his mind to stay away.

In Banaras he studied the books he loved—the Vedas, having taught himself Sanskrit.

About this time Mahatma Gandhi had returned to India and settled in the Sabarmati Ashram. Looking round for a spiritual and political anchor, Vinoba chose the Mahatma instinctively and wrote for permission to join his ashram. Without waiting for a reply, he appeared. The Mahatma saw a slim young man and without much ado admitted him.

In 1916 the Mahatma had not yet assumed the leadership of India. In the ashram not very far from Ahmedabad, he lived a simple but rigorous life of which cooking, weaving, grinding and scavenging were essential features. Here was a school of national workers whom the Mahatma was to employ in the coming struggle.

Vinoba found in the Mahatma a restless spirit like his own,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

yearning to express itself in the national interest. He willingly submitted himself to the hard discipline. The Mahatma watched him from a distance while he carried heavy buckets of water from the nearby well. He was impressed by the little man's uncomplaining efforts. He never demurred, though eventually his health broke down.

The Mahatma, hearing about it talked to him for the first time—alone. He inquired how he managed to put in so much work despite his health. "By the will to work," said the young man. Impressed by Vinoba's enthusiasm, the Mahatma advised him rest.

For a whole year he was away and came back to find a warm welcome from the Mahatma. "You are no longer for this ashram. The ashram is for you," he said.

During his rest at Satara he increased his knowledge of Sanskrit reading Brahama Sutras and Vedantic philosophy and by attending a Pathshala. On this return to the ashram he took to teaching boys and has continued this ever since.

In the meantime the Mahatma was being drawn more and more into active politics. In 1919 when the first protest week against the Rowlatt Bill was observed members of the ashram, including Mr. Bhave, for the first time went out to preach the gospel of non-violence to unruly crowds in Ahmedabad. When at last, Mahatma Gandhi took have of the ashramites to lead the movement, he asked Mr. Bhave to take general charge of the inmates. His ability, devotion and quite enthusiasm had gained general recognition.

In 1921, when the Mahatma decided to open a branch of his ashram at Wardha he selected Vinoba to take complete charge of it. He has always been known as "Acharya" (head) of the Wardha ashram.

Between 1933 and 1937 he lived in the Harijan colony near Wardha and has since settled at Pawnar, a village five miles

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

from Wardha, where his admirers have built an Ashram, called "God's abode."

April 12, 1948 *The Statesman, New Delhi.*

Speech at the Social and Political Workers' Conference Bodh Gaya, October 1968

Shortly before Gandhiji's death he was planning to call together a conference of workers at Sevagram, but this was not to be. However, a meeting of his fellow-workers was held there not long afterwards. It was attended both by political leaders such as Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru and also by constructive workers. Some of the latter made proposals to the political leaders and asked for their help. When I was asked to speak I said that this was the first opportunity for our large 'family' of workers to get together, and that we as yet hardly knew one another. I told Pandit Nehru that I did not feel that this was the time for us to ask for help; but that we would be ready to give him any help that was possible with our limited strength.

Pandit Nehru assigned us work with the refugees, which we accepted. It was decided that we should work particularly among Muslims to restore their confidence. A few of us, including Jajuji and Janakibehn (Bajaj) went to Delhi and undertook to work for six months in the first place. Our six months held enough curious experience to fill a book; but we soon found that progress was badly blocked by the slowness, blindness or obstruction of some officials. We worked very hard, but we could not achieve what we had hoped towards Sarvodaya; so at the end of the six months we decided to give up the work.

I began to consider what we ought to do. The constructive workers were timid and ineffective and had no self-confidence. Sardar Patel said in one of his speeches that they all go on spinning faithfully but no one takes any notice. When people did not listen to Gandhiji, why should they listen to us? Now

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

that India is free, he said, we, need industries with a 'war potential'. His phrase 'war potential' set me thinking. It seemed to me that what the world needs is not 'war potential' but 'peace potential'. We must set up industries and activities with a 'peace potential.'

I began to plan for an all India pilgrimage on behalf of this 'peace potential', but I had not spoken about my plans to anyone. Then Shankarraoji and others began to press me to attend the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Sivarampalli. I did not feel interested, but they threatend to cancel the meeting if I would not come. So finally I said : "All right, I will come on foot; I will leave Sevagram the day after tomorrow."

My going on foot caused an explosion like an atom bomb, and yet it was nothing extraordinary. People have always journeyed on foot, although now-a-days it is not usual. I planned to return by a different route which would bring me into touch with the problems of Telengana at that time.

So I came to a village, Pochampalli, where the Harijans appealed to me to get them land, as they were cultivators and had no other means of livelihood. At first I thought of approaching the goverenment but decided that would be of no use. So at the evening meeting in the village I put the problem to the villagers, and was offered a gift of a hundred acres.

I lay awake most of that night thinking about what had happened. I put my faith in two thinks—God and mathematics. I calculated that to satisfy the needs of all the landless of India would require fifty million acres. Could I get such an amount for the asking? I turned to God. "If you are afraid to take up the challenge", He said, "you had better throw overboard your talk of *ahimsa*. He who makes the child hungry makes milk in the mother's breast." That was enough; the very next day I began asking for land and getting it. I will not go over that long story now. It was a wonderful journey. There were meetings every day and everyday people gave me land. I travelled in a kind of exaltation, humming

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Rabindranath Tagore's song. "Go forth alone, O hapless one," but, I changed the word' 'hapless' into 'blessed'. The *Vedas* also say that 'the sun travels alone'; it was an inspiration to see the sun travelling alone through the heavens as I travelled alone over the earth.

When we entered Uttar Pradesh the time of the 1952 election was approaching, and election meetings were going on. We also were holding meetings, and while the election meetings were noisy and disorderly, ours were peaceful and people listened intently. It seemed to me a good omen that they should show such interest at such a time.

One of the political leaders there was Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. He referred to *bhoodan* in one of his speeches saying that it was a 'very good' programme, by which he meant 'impracticable', he went on to say that it would take three hundred years to carry it through. I replied that I too could do arithmetic, and at the rate of one lakh acres a year I calculated that it would take five hundred years to reach the target of fifty million acres, so that if he put it at three hundred years only it must mean that he would help us.

That year we did get one lakh acres, and when the Sarvodaya Sammelan met at Sevapuri they decided with great enthusiasm that we must get no less than two and half million acres during the next two years. By that time I had reached Benares, and a decision had to be taken whether to go next to Bihar, or to Vindhya Pradesh, Bihar has a great tradition, so I said that I would not accept less than four million acres as Bihar's quota. The Bihar Sarvodaya leader Lakshmi Babu agreed. "After all", he said, there are seventy five thousand village and it only means five, acres from each village." So I entered Bihar and started asking for four million acres, that is for one-sixth of the land for the landless. After a while, however, I feel ill, and had to stop working for a time. The Chief Minister Dr. Sri Krishna Sinha came to see me and with tears in his eyes begged me to agree to medical treatment. (I do not normally take medicines.) I agreed, on condition that his Congress party would collect the

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

four million acres. More careful calculations showed that one-sixth of the land was actually 3.2 million acres, and Congress undertook to collect this amount. In the States I had visited previously the Congress had declared its sympathy and promised to help 'as far as possible'. You know what this usually means! People advised the chief Minister not to be so rash as to mention figures, but he retorted that he knew his business. However, when 2.2 million acres had been given, I felt I should not be greedy for more, and that I should undertake next an all-India tour.

Now I will skip five years and come to the Yelwal Sammelan. During those five years *bhoodan* had developed into *gramdan*. But I sometimes wondered whether this was just a crazy fad of mine or whether it had some real merit. So we called the leaders of India together at Yelwal to examine the matter objectively. The responded well; from Nehru to Nambudripad, they all came, including people whose politics were diametrically opposed and who perhaps had never met before. Nehru was specially impressed by the fact that such diverse people could meet for common purpose. I spoke for an hour on the first day, and then said no more. After two days of full discussion a resolution was passed calling for 'enthusiastic support' from the whole nation for the movement, as one that contributes to the moral and the material welfare of the country, and promising government help. Some of our workers expected that these leaders would throw in their lot with us, and were disappointed that they did not do so. I was not disappointed, for I knew that these leaders were not merely railway coaches to be hooked on to our engine; they were engines themselves, and engines with their own coaches to pull. They could not be expected to join our train, but they did give us the green light. They also gave us a 'certificate' that *gramdan* is an economically sound proposition.

In my speech at Yelwal I called *gramdan* a 'defence measure,' and Pandit Nehru made a note of the phrase. "When you make your five-year plans", I said, "you assume that the world will be at peace. But if war should break out all your calcula-

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

tions would be upset, and your plans would collapse like a house of cards. But *gramdan* would not collapse." I do not know what made me say this; there was no war talk at that time but the idea came to me on the spur of the moment.

I will now pass over another five years, to my last meeting with Nehru, in Bengal. We had often met before with other people present, but at that time of crisis (the war with China) we met alone and in private. We talked for two hours and I noticed that Panditji was taking notes of what I said. Later there was a huge public meeting of many thousand people. I spoke for about twentyfive minutes on *gramdan*, and then Nehru spoke. He referred to the confrontation with China; we had lost some land, he said, and we must get it back. "But that is no great matter. Our real war is the war on poverty, and that is a hard struggle. But Vinoba has offered you a weapon of the greatest value in that war, that is *gramdan*." After that, wherever I spoke in Bengal I would tell the people; "I am only a servant; I can appeal, I cannot command. But Pandit Nehru is our honoured leader, who has the right to command. His command and my appeal are for the same thing; two engines are pulling the train. You should take up *gramdan* seriously."

At this time of crisis I also began to consider how to make the *gramdan* revolution spread more rapidly and widely. It seemed to me that instead of insisting on the actual distribution of land we should insist on common agreement to the *gramdan* principle, but make the immediate practical steps simple. On this basis a lot of *gramdan* took place in Bengal, and Jayaprakash Narayan was much impressed with its revolutionary potential, and began to spread the idea wherever he went.

Next came the Sarvodaya Sammelan at Raipur. I have given up attending such meetings, but this was an exception. There was great enthusiasm and new ideas and aspirations filled our minds. The meeting launched the three-fold programme of *gramdan*, *khadi*, and *shantisena*. It was felt that if we could concentrate on these three as an integrated whole, other aspects of the constructive programme such as Nai Talim (basic education) and Harijan uplift would naturally fall into place.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Since then, five years have gone by. How much time have we given, you and I, towards carrying out this programme? Let each one judge himself. Speaking for myself, I cannot complain that God denied me the fruits of my labour—on the contrary, I think that God has given us more than we deserve for the time we have put in.

The three-fold programme was decided on because it was considered fundamental, and full of "peace potential". *Shanti sena* is essential, because we cannot claim that non-violence has effective power until we have organised *shanti sena* on so large a scale that there is practically no need for the police, and none at all for the army, to maintain law and order.

As for *gramdan*, we shall not be fit for the new age till every village regards itself as a family. For the new age is the age of world-government. The world-state will be directed by a tribunal of the world's wisest men. India will be one province; Bihar one district; our present districts will be local units and our villages the families. Nowadays our family affections are too narrow. We must enlarge them to encompass the village. There can be no world peace without this broadening of outlook. Our two slogans. *Jai Jagat* and *gramdan*, go together. We talk of the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R.. We need to build another U.S.S.R.—a United States of Sarvodaya Republics—and its 'peace potential' will become clear.

Now I come to *khadi*. I have been telling our *Khadi*, workers over and over again that they cannot be saved by depending on government help. Such dependence destroys all vigour and initiative. *Khadi* ought to be the vehicle of a people's revolution. What Gandhiji meant by *khadi* was village *khadi*; and our *khadi* work will not become village-oriented unit it becomes part and parcel of the *Gramdan* movement.

I shall give you an example of my 'impracticable' ideas. Last year, during the Bihar famine, I visited Madhubani. There were *khadi* stocks worth millions of rupees; and so I suggested to the man in charge that it should be distributed to the famine-stricken people shivering in the cold. How could we repeat

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

the vows of *swadeshi* and *aparigraha* in our daily prayers while we hold on to all this cloth which our neighbours need? Don't bother about permission, I said. Of course it will be unconstitutional to give this cloth away, but it will be highly moral. Compassion is the essence of morality. One should be ready to go to jail cheerfully in such a cause. But who listens to me? "When the king speaks, the army moves; when the *fakir* speaks, only his beard moves"—as the proverb says. But my plan would at least solve the problem of accumulated stocks.

At the end of one of my tours I planned to spend a period of quiet reflection at the Brahma-Vidya Mandir Paunar, which I had not been able to visit for years. But I had not been there long when some people came from Bihar to meet me. Almost without thinking I found myself saying; "If you will raise a typhoon in Bihar I will come." "What do you mean by a typhoon?" they asked. I said that it meant getting a given number of *gramdan* pledges within a given time. They talked it over among themselves and agreed.

I, therefore, went to Bihar, but people began to criticize these *gramdan* pledges, saying that they were scraps of paper and that nothing would come out of them. But a lot of work had to be done and a lot of villages visited, to get that scrap of paper. Even in Gandhiji's times such close contact was never achieved. This movement means visiting every village and every house, even seeking people out in the fields. When I hear about this 'scrap of paper' I ask the critics if their election votes are not also scraps of paper and yet they generate power. The signatures on the *gramdan* pledge are votes, votes for *gramdan*.

Our present system of democracy is unjust because it does not give the right to vote to young people under twenty one. There are many examples of young people, barely in their twenties, who did remarkable things. William Pitt became Prime Minister of England; Napoleon Bonaparte showed himself a brilliant general; in India one could name Madhavarao Peshva, Shankaracharya, Jnaneswar. Eisenhower commented that when a youth of eighteen is considered fit to fight for his country why should he not be fit to vote for his government?

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The election system is also faulty. At the last election the Congress was returned to power with 38% of the votes. After that important public measures are considered by the party before being placed before Parliament. They may be approved by twenty votes to eighteen, but the eighteen people are obliged by party discipline to vote for the measure in public. This manipulation means that the country is ruled not by a majority but by a minority.

What is the sanction behind all the "isms"? Fascism, Socialism, Welfare-ism, Communism may have different names, but they are all alike in relying on force. Thers is nowhere any freedom for man. China swallowed Tibet, Russia swallowed Czechoslovakia, America attacked Vietnam. All alike impose their will by military might. We long to see the world freed from the tyranny of force, and the times are in our favour. It is the call of our age; and if we wish to succeed we must set the villages upon their feet. These scraps of paper, these votes for *gramdan* lend strength to all our work. They contain a tremendous peace potential.

What next, then? First, form the village council. Next, give the landless some land, so that they have practical evidence that something is being done. Then start a village fund by pooling one-fortieth of all produce for village development. After that, get the government to recognize the *gramdan*.

The next step is freedom from drunkenness, police and law courts. That means a *shantisena* to keep the peace in the village. Disputes should not go to the courts but be settled on the spot. Then there should be a weekly meeting for prayer and for reading Sarvodaya news to the people. If ten or a dozen leading villagers each give a small contribution the necessary journals can be bought and the village can also give a small donation to the Sarva Seva Sangh. This is the way to generate real power, much more than the voting system.

Each man has his own skill, his own capacity for work. No two are alike. This is how God has made us, so that we

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

are only complete when we work together. You can see today what tremendous enthusiasm has been aroused by our common effort in the Sarvodaya world in India. We feel we can move mountains, and why not? God will bless our resolution; we shall achieve our revolution for peace.

It was on the celebrated day of April 18, 1951 that Acharya Vinoba Bhave, India's first Satyagrahi of the Second World War, launched his movement of the Bhu-Dan Yajna. Since then he has covered several districts of Hyderabad State, Madhya Pradesh, Madhya Bharat Vidhya Pradesh and almost every district of the Uttar Pradesh. On September 14 last he left U.P. for Bihar where he is carrying on his mission these days. By now he has obtained on behalf of the dumb millions of India several lakhs of acres of land for distribution among the landless. The last eighteen months have shown the efficacy and potentialities of the non-violent way to solve economic problems. Springing from the depths of India's soul, Vinoba's technique has appealed to the masses. It has also attracted the attention of the intelligentia of the country. Nay, of late, serious students of economics, beyond the shores of India, have begun to view it with sympathetic concern.

As is well known Vinoba commenced his campaign in the Telugu-speaking eastern parts of Hyderabad State—known as Telengana where the Communists, by sheer dint of selfless service and sacrifice stretching for a number of years, had richly earned the trust of the peasantry. But the germ of the movement had gained ground in Vinoba's mind long earlier. During this campaign he has come in contact with all shades of people and all types or polititical groups of parties, not excluding Communists and the Communist Party. He has also had the honour to receive welcome-addresses from the Communists who, at places, did help him in his movement as well. But recently they have begun to give the Bhu-dan Yajna movement bad names, calling it a "farce" to perpetuate exploitation and to distract the attention of the people from finding a correct solution of the land problem.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I have carefully gone through the Communist censure or criticism of the Bhu-Dan Yajna. The impression left there at upon me is that perhaps they neither try to keep in touch with the progress of Vinoba's movement nor care to go through any literature in this connection. Whatever may be said against the Communists or their activities, but every-body recognises their urge for learning and their earnestness to keep up-to-date in matters political and economic. Yet I must confess that their recent writings have set me a-thinking and I wonder whether New Delhi's Rashtrapati Bhawan style has warped the tenor of their life as well. If true, it is a very sad development indeed.

A writer in one of the articles, prominently displayed in the Communist Press, says that "in his very first speech in Bihar, Vinobaji had a full go at the Communists", meaning thereby that Vinoba is either an enemy of Communists or is afraid of them. He is neither. If they could rip open his heart they would find, as he said in a post-prayer speech on 24th September last :

> "My Yajna did begin in Telengana, but not because of Communists. I want to assure my Communist friends that I bear no ill-feeling towards them. On the other hand, my fellings are good. God made a mistake in not equipping the breast with a window to know the inside of one's heart. Had there been one you would find that I am full of love towards the Communists."

Nay, in May 1951 he declared at Warangal :

> "The rich can be done away with without a pistol, for every adult has now the right to vote. In future the Government would belong to every individual. I beg of the Communists to come out into the open and work. Could they work in the open I would give them my complete co-operation".

No friend of the Communists can go farther.

The second serious objection raised against the Yajna is that the 'vast majority donors are middle and even poor kisans' who themselves come 'within the category of the exploited and who

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

are themselves producers'. The Communists are at a loss to follow 'how taking land from these people can be termed ending of exploitation.' Also it is alleged that the land given by big landlords is sometimes of the worthless and uncultivable variety, and the donation is more in the nature of a face-saving attempt than that of really helping the down-trodden. Both of these objections are true. But they are as old as the movement itself.

Vinoba accepts the gift of the poor because his movement is a Yajna in which everybody must offer what he or she can. What counts is not the 'poverty' of the possessions of the donor but the 'richness' of his heart. And who does not know that those called poor have a richer heart? For did not Jesus say : "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God?" If the rich do not easily part with their land it is no ground to reject the poor. It simply shows that the haves have not yet so much grasped the substance of Vinoba's movement as the have-nots have done.

No doubt the rich landlord donates quite often to gain something—official favours, name or what not. Sometimes he parts with disputed portion of his porperty to kill, as he would fondly imagine, two birds with one stone. Vinoba is deeply aware of these, call them tricks or intrigues. But this does not disturb him and his confident reply is :

> "I am an ocean in which rivers come with all types of waters—dirty, hard, soft or fine. I acceept them with full grace".

And to the query that the rich give only a very small portion his fearless answer is :

> "Let them give today what they can. More they will give tomorrow and the balance the day after. For, all land is mine, not theirs. SABAI BHUMI GOPAL KI (All land belongs to God)."

Thus it is Vinoba's irrevocable belief in the gradual conversion of the heart that he swallows every pill, sweet or sour.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Conversion there shall be. The Communists cannot cast off this faith in conversion. After all nobody is a Communist by brith. He or she gets converted to it at a certain stage in one's life. And frequently this conversion comes about in a very non-violent manner.

Conversion is intimately connected with the idea of Sarvodaya, i.e. the ever greatest good of one and all. Again, here is a very great misunderstanding—some of our Communist and leftist friends regard Sarvodaya principle as the 'maintaning of the status quo'. This is no more true than any American propagandist's assertion that India's Community Projects are a part of the Gandhian Constructive programme. They are not. In fact, launching them on Bapu's birthday was an attempt. as Mirabehn says, to tear Bapu's heart asunder. So also Sarvodaya unequivocally stands for a change in the established order. Had it meant maintenance of status-quo India would not have produced Gandhi nor Vinoba would have begged from door to door. Sarvodaya aims, as Communism does, at a classless and castleless society. The ends of the two are the same. But the means are different and that accounts for all the difference between the two.

This brings us to another objection against the Bhu-Dan Yajna—that it has not "brought even an iota of change in the social structure." Surely Vinoba never imagined that his walking down twelve miles every morning would change the social structure in that area. No reformer, thinker or leader ever did or could do so. Even the morning sun which can melt the hardest snow of the tallest cliff fails to awake one and all. It brings about a change in the life of only those who are prepared to leave their bed. Ii is helpless against those who have no inclination to get up. We are to judge the success of the Bhu-Dan Yajna not by what it has not achieved but by what it has done, small though it be. And it can hardly be denied that it has changed the heart of some persons to some extent. And to that extent it has changed the mental structure of the society. Mark, I do not say social structure. For land

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

problem alone will not solve or buid up the whole structure. It will only help changing it. Also Vinoba makes no claim :

> "I am not trying to solve the big land problem. I do want it solved peacefully, but nobody could settle all the word's affairs. Ram had been there and Krishna had been there. They had done what they could do for the world, but there is no end to problems. One can only do one's work".

All that he proposes to do is to change the atmosphere—just to create the right consciousness among the people.

It is, therefore, very regrettable that the Communist friends have, deliberately or otherwise, fallen foul of the Bhu-Dan Yajna. Had they gone deeper they would have easily realised the full implications of it. This perhaps why Dr. J. C. Kumarappa often says, "I have gone round the world. I have been to China and to Rusia. But I found Communists nowhere except in India."

What, after all, is the reason of this antipathy towards the Bhu-Dan-Yajna? Perhaps it lies in the association of the Congress and the Paraja-Socialist Party with it. Hence on grounds of blind party-politics, what the non-Communists do must be condemned by the Communists and vice-versa. I am afraid this is a very wrong conception of public service. Following regulated party lines reduces us to mere sepoys for whom the spinal chord was more than enough. In the long run this attitude harms the country as also the party and the individual. In this connection I cannot help reproducing the beautiful words of New China's maker, Mao Tse-tung, to Shrimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit : "Let us unite for construction; let us unite for peace". India's misfortune is that Congressmen or Communists, Praja-Socialists or Jan Sanghites, etc., cannot unite or construction or peace or for anything else. And the country is reduced to the unenviable position of the proverbial patient whose malady gets deeper with every treatment.

To call Bhu-Dan Yajna a 'farce' or means to perpetuate exploitation is adding insult to injury. For who is Vinoba and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

what is his Bhu-Dan Yajna? Vinoba is a Satyagrahi and his Bhu-Dan Yajna is his invisible Satyagraha to win India's economic and moral and social liberty. He is not a street beggar to amass lands. He is revolutionary who has begun his Satyagraha march. As he said at the last Sarvodaya Conference at Sevapuri (Banaras) :

> "I want to tell you that if I command any honour it is as a Satyagrahi. I know no other honour. Therefore, if Satyagraha is required I shall invariably offer it....Believe me when I say that I have never harboured any thought that did not bear fruit."

Both the Congressmen and Communists would do well to grasp the real significance of the Bhu-Dan Yajna movement. If the former imagine that their co-operation in the Yajna will help them tos implement their present policy so as to go on holding reins of power for all time they are sadly mistaken. If the latter imagine that the Yajna will not touch the existing states of affairs they are equally misled. Both of them should know that the same Vinoba who was asking for only land yesterday has already made a call for income. And rest assured that tomorrow he is going to demand everything else for Daridra Narain—a Sarv-Dan Yajna, a call for total donation. Doubtless he will also call those in power to part with it for the powerless. His is a battle on behalf of the poor, the have-nots, the non-possessed, the powerlsss, the lowly or the lost. One would do well to decide and take sides accordingly before it is too late.

On July 3, 1952, Vinoba, the apostle of Bhu-Dana-Yagna or Land-Gift-Mission completed his tour of Uttar Pradesh. But for a brief halt of 11 days at Delhi in November, he has covered village after village, district after district of this State. During his march he secured about two and a half lakhs of acres of land for *Daridra Narayna*, the landless poor.

Curiously enough little is known of the life-history of this unique wizard. Nor does he encourge his biographers. As he himself says, most of his real life has been lived rather within

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

than without and if his biography is to be written he has to write it himself. Like Mahatma Gandhi's "Experiments with Truth", Vinoba's autobiography, whenever it comes to light, will be the enchanting story of the pilgrimage of a soul in constant communion with itself and ceaselessly moving ahead to its cherished objective of the realisation of the Brotherhood of Man and Fatherhood of God.

In an immortal verse Tulsidas has compared the character of a saint to that of a cotton fibre since both undergo suffering to contribute to the welfare of others. And just as the black soil of Maharashtra is the richest cotton producing area of the country so also it has been an eternal source from which has sprung up a perennial current of saints who have slaked the parched throat not only of the people of Maharashtra but that of the whole country. Nivritti, Gyandev, Ramdas, Namdev, Eknath and Tukaram are familiar names who have found an abiding place in India's legend, history and song. The latest member of the self-same procession is the beggar-saint of Paunar, Vinayak Narhari Bhave, commonly known as Vinoba as Gandhiji gave him the name. Born on August 11, 1895 at Gagoda in the Kolaba district of Bombay Presidency, Vinoba passed a large part of his early life at Baroda, the capital of Baroda State where his father, who passed away in September 1947, was in Government service. Vinoba is the eldest of three brothers, the younger, Sri Balkoba is running the well-known Nature-cure clinic at Uruli Kanchan (Poona) and the youngest, Sri Shivaji, doing constructive work at Daulia in Khandesh. All the three brothers are '*bal brahmacharies*.' The father, Sri Narhari Sambhurao Bhave, was a kind and genial soul who never lost his temper and was always truthful and methodical in his ways. Well versed in music, he had a passion for it and has written two books on the subject. Also he was very much interested in dyeing and painting. After retirement he gave some of his time to the Maharashtra branch of the A.I.S.A.

One evening in September 1950 I was at Paunar when, on being reminded by his Secretary that it was his father's third

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

death anniversary, Vinoba referred to him in his post-prayer speech. But it is the mother about whom he speaks the least for she has contributed the most in his make-up. A deeply religious and devoted woman, a Maharashtra Brahmin to the core, with the songs of saints at her lips, she lived a very pious and quite an ideal family life. Being her first-bron, he was also her most beloved. It was from her, that Vinya, as she called him, developed his wonderful asceticism and taste for the inner flights of the soul. Whatever she did, she dedicated it to God and never took any thing in the household until she had shared it with her neighbours, the duty of distribution being enjoined upon her Vinya.

In 1907 Vinoba entered the Baroda High School. He was a voracious reader specially keen in Mathematics. He has remained a mathematician all his life, for he does nothing unless he satisfied himself by making calculations about it. That is why there is no wastage about him, and he once said that during the whole of his school and college life he wasted not even a minute of his time. He was also quite fond of news-papers, among which he read out *Kesari*, the well-known mouth-piece of Lokmanya Tilak, to his mother every day. He took his Matric Examination in November 1913.

But Vinoba was, it seems, not content with his life and began to think of leaving home for good and give himself up to high work. Two years of Intermediate were of intense agitation and suffering. In 1916 Vinoba, an undergraduate, came out of the Baroda College. During the past few years he had read so much that his eye-sight fell down to minus eight. But his memory being strong sayings after sayings of Maharashtra saints were committed to his heart and he thus enjoyed an intellectual realm all his own. His study helped him immensely later to translate the Sanskrit Gita into Marathi parallel couplets. When I requested him one day to take out some time and translate the Gita into Hindi as well he replied, "Well I can't do that, for I have not read your Hindi saints except Tulsidas, that too only his Ramayana and Vinaya Patrika. As regards Marathi, I had mugged up all I could lay hands upon long-long ago."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

From his early years Vinoba has been fond of walking. In Baroda, he with his few friends, used to walk for three to four hours every day and covered some sixteen miles daily. Walking and reading can be said to be his main two occupations. In the Baroda Central Library, his was a familiar figure, with his shirt or kurta hanging on the shoulder. In 1914 at College he started a Vidyarthi Mandal, a short of study circle.

The year 1916 marks the close of one chapter of Vinoba's life and the commencement of another. Mahatma Gandhi had by now come upon the Indian scene and started an Ashram at Kochrab in Gujarat. Vinoba joined it. But after some time he took one year study leave. Gandhiji testifies to it that Vinoba returned to the Ashram exactly after one year, to the very day. As he said in a letter to Gandhiji, dated February 10, 1918, during these twelve months he strictly observed Ashram rules and regulations and what he did is simply awful. During this period, he studied the Upanishads, the Gita, the Brahma Sutra and Shankar Bhashya, the Manusmiriti, the Patanjala Yoga-Darshan and read through the Nyaya Sutra, Vaisheshik Sutra and Yagnavalkya Smriti and took a vow never to take salt or spices. Besides, he conducted a Gita class of six s udents, a Gyaneshwari class of four students, an Upanishad class of two, an English class of two and a big Hindi class. Also he covered 400 miles on foot during which he delivered 50 discourses on the Gita etc. Concluding his letter, he asked Gandhiji to accept him as his son. Bapu blessed him and wished him a life of service to the country.

In 1918 Vinoba returned to the Sabarmati Ashram. Three years later the late Seth Jamnalal Bajaj came to Gandhiji requesting him the gift of the Ashram's most blossoming flower, Vinoba, for a constructive-work centre at Wardha. Bapu agreed and so in 1921, Vinoba came to Wardha to direct and guide the Mahila Ashram. With him came, some of his ablest colleagues who are working right upto now.

Another important event in 1918 in Vinoba's life was the death of his dear and revered mother. At Bapu's bidding he had gone there earlier at her service. But he did not participate

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

in her funeral ceremony for he wanted to perform the last rites himself whereas the orthodox custom allowed only the professional priest to do it. And he spent the time at home in reciting the Gita and the Upanishads.

Vinoba's activities from 1921 to 1947 may be regarded as the researches both of a soul-physicist in the laboratory of his self and of a cottage chemist in the laboratory of his Ashram village. The former took him to cosmic spiritual heights, while the latter found expression in the enrichment of the various items of Gandhiji's constructive programme, specially khadi, village industries, Nai Talim and safai. In January 1933 he shifted to Nalwadi, a village about a mile and half from Wardha, where he resolved to support himself by spinning work alone and he spun for hours and hours going deep into the various aspects of khadi craft. Illness overtook him and he was advised to go to hills for rest. He told Bapu that he had chosen his own hill station—a desolated hillock. Like piece of land by the side of the Paunar river, some four miles from Wardha town, where stood a cottage built by Seth Jamnalalji. He gave it the name of Paramdham Ashram which has remained his headquarters ever since.

Again, it was from Wardha that Vinoba took his silent part in the political movements of Gandhiji. He was among the moving spirits of the Nagpur Flag Satyagraha of 1923, his other companions being Seth Jamnalalji, Mahatma Bhagwandeen, and Sri Nilkanthrai Deshmukh. Next year, in 1924, Bapu sent him to Guruvayoor, Travancore, in the Harijan Temple-Entry Satyagraha. The climax came in October 1940 when he appeared before the world as India's foremost Satyagrahi of the Second World War. In the individual Satyagraha movement he went to jail thrice. As in 1930-31 he was again arrested in 1942 and released three years later.

Returning to Paunar in 1945, he took up a new programme of the scavenger of the village Surgaon. Daily he walked down three to four miles from Paunar to Surgaon and commenced his work regularly at eight o'clock, in heat or cold, sun or rain.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Nothing could interrupt him except the death of Bapu when he felt suddenly called upon to undertake higher and more serious responsibilities. It was at his persuasion that the Sarvodaya Samaj was founded in March 1948. Sometime after he want round the country and took interest in the problem of the resettlement of the Meoes near Delhi. That too, however, did not pacify his inner urges. Again an illness came to his rescue and after servere hard thinking he resolved upon a new venture of physical labour and self-sufficiency at Paramdham in which he himself worked in the fields for eight to ten hours a day. That experiment goes on still with a band of selfless workers devoted to it under his guidance.

While busy in his Samya-Yoga work, Vinoba was urged upon by leading members of Sarvodaya Samaj to attend the third session at Shivarampalli (Hyderabad-Dn). He consented and on 8th March 1951 left Paunar on foot and after covering more than 300 miles reached Shivarampalli on 7th April. On his way back he thought of going through the Telangana area. It was at Pachampalli village in Nalgonda district on 18th April that the idea of Bhu-Dan-Yagna flashed across his mind and with Ram-nam on his lips he launched upon the Bhu-Dan-Yagna, which is now a country-wide movement.

As has been said above, Vinoba translated Gita into Marathi in 1930-31 and gave it the name of Gitai (Gita+Ai Gita the mother), which has sold into thousands and lakhs. His devotion to Gita is matchless and complete. As he says, Gita is his life-element (*Pran-tatwa*) and he lives in the Gita-air. His discourses on Gita, Gita Pravachan, are a wonderful exposition of the Gita. It has been translated into Hindi, Telegu, Kannarese, Malayalam and several other languages of the country.

Like a true devotee of Gita, Vinoba refuses to distinguish between 'Karma' (Action) and 'Gynan' (Knowledge) and 'Bhakti' (devotion) and feels that all three must go together as the shape and weight and sweetness of a 'laddoo' go. He is, therefore, a master of action and hero of thought and genius of devotion. As a master of action he has been a farmer, scavenger,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

teli, coolie etc. As a hero of thought he has given some very illustrious gems to the Marathi literature. Besides, Vinoba is a linguist of eminence. Marathi is his mother tongue, so also Gujarati. He has acquired a thorough knowledge of Hindi, Bengali, Oriya and Punjabi. He knows all the four South Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu, Kannara and Malayalam. In Telangana he translated the Shlokas of Gita in Telugu and recently he was studying the classical Tamil Veda. English and French he learnt at school. That he is always young as a student is clear by the fact that he learnt Arabic at the age of 46 and studied the Holy Quran which he can recite remarkably well. As a genius of devotion he went into trance and tears rolled down his cheeks when he opened the Lakshmi Narayan Temple of Wardha. Thus his whole life is dedicated to God whom he wants to see in the smallest particle as also in the poorest and most down-trodden. The late Sri Mahadev Desai wrote about him :

> "Vinoba has something which others have not. His first-rank characteristic is to resolve his decision into action the moment the former is once made. His second characteristic is continuous growth...Besides Bapu, I found this quality in Vinoba alone."

This is perfectly true. Like a flowing stream Vinoba is always new and fresh. Yet he observes his routine with a sunlike regularity. His refusal to cut short his programme when he met with a serious accident near Meerut in November last, bears this out. And every day he has something new to say in his post prayer speech.

Vinoba, though on foot, is fast moving onward. He is not merely to take an acre of land here or half there. His is to bring about a revolution in the life of the society as a whole. The Bhu-Dan-Yajna is an initial Satyagraha to this end. One can well see that time is not far off when he will give a call for Sarv-Dan-Yajna and turn the present unfortunate tide in the economic, social and political life of the country. But what forms the future Satyagraha will take nobody can say. Yet none

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

need be in doubt about the final objective, but attainment of economic and social freedom of the country. The Bhu-Dhan-Yajana, therefore, is the first step. And the more selflessly and sincerely and resolutely it is taken, the easier the journey ahead. Vinoba is on the march! Long Live Vinoba!

(Suresh Rambhai)

Birendranath Guha called him a powerful soul. "A powerful soul lives in a weak body. As the soul advances in strength, the body languishes," Gandhi wrote, in *Navajivan*, June 5, 1954. If it is acceptable, Vinayak Narhari Bhave may very well possess a powerful soul. And he does. Vinoba stands five foot six and weighs just seven stones. He works hard. He walks a lot, not less than twelve to thirteen miles in the average. His day begins at 3 A.M. and usually ends at 9 P.M. He and his associates pray as they work, or, now, as they walk.

As the writer first saw him he had the feeling that had not there been a Gandhi to draw him to the service of man as service of God, he might well have been one of the very highest order of recluses of whom India has ever had a succession. But very soon he came to revise his estimate. For, like all the great souls of India who had something new to give, Vinoba also has a commentary of his own on the *Gita*. And it emphasizes immaculate service as the road to unity with the Maker. Vinoba has a complete philosophy of life. And that philosophy, if not the whole, quite a large slice of it must be akin to Gandhi's. For ascribing to Gandhi all that he is doing, and the great change that has come in his manners, he says, "It is Bapu's blessings that have wrought this miracle. I believe, the work I am doing would please his soul wherever it might be." And again, "This day, I feel the presence of Bapu, as I feel the presence of God."

Who will now say which of the two estimates is the correct one! Vinoba only can.

"Makest me thy slave, effacest my ego, erasest my name",

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

so prays Vinoba just as the master did, "I want to be his willing slave." Vinoba wants to reduce himself to a zero.

The dumb millions are his masters as they were to Gandhi. Gandhi would not go to the Himalayas to see God. So too, Vinoba would not go to sacred places to seek his God. "...But for me the place where you all live is the sacred place. To me your bodies are not just compounds of the five elements. I look upon you as my God. Long journeys tire out this frail body. But when I get an opportunity to serve you my fatigue vanishes."

Yet Vinoba is not an echo. It is fortunate he is not. For it is not given to an echo to walk a new way, to give a thing a new shape such as the times demand, to fulfil a historical necessity. Vinoba has to fulfil a historical necessity. Vinoba is original. Vinoba is a revolutionary. Gandhi gone, India needed such a one as he. India has half the Swaraj. The other half remains to be constructed. If it is to be as it was envisaged by Gandhi and as alone can lead to the true emancipation of the masses, it needs a revolutionary. Vinoba's *Bhoodan Yajna* is the first step to the realization of that economic independence—the *Sarvodaya*.

One's work is one's life. Vinoba's work is just now before the public. And it is an ample page. Yet men look backward, as they look forward to size up a thing. It is in them.

Born in 1984, Vinoba will complete his fifty-seventh year on September 11. He was the eldest of five children, four sons and a daughter born to Narahari Bhave and Rukmini Devi. The Bhaves of Gagoda, Tahsil Pen, District Ko'aba in Maharashtra were fairly well-to-do Chitpavan Brahmans. The youngest of the four brothers died young. Balkrishna Vikoji Bhave the second brother is in charge of the Nature Cure Centre, started by Gandhi at Uruli-Kanchan. The third brother Shivaji, a great Sanskrit scholar, lives at Dhulia unattached to any Ashram or institution. He takes orders from the eldest brother and is engaged in language reform work. Under instructions of

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Vinoba he has given shape to *Loka Nagari lipi* which avoids use of compounds.

Rukmini must have been a wise lady, a sensible mother. Vinoba got a lot from her. He often fomdly refers to her in his writings. In the obituary notice in *Sarvodaya* of Raman Maharshi the following occurs : "One day while reading *Bhakta-Vijaya* I remarked, 'Mother, such saints were there only in ancient times'. 'Mother said,' Vinoba continues, 'they are there even today. Only we do not know them. Without such as these the world cannot go.' " Gita-pravachana cantains many a like reference to his mother. Vinoba writes :

"Like so many, I also once said to mother, "Here is a beggar strong and plump, come to beg. To give alms to such a one is to encourage indolence and lassitude.' And I cited in support the *Deshe kale cha patre cha* sloka from the Gita. Mother said, 'The beggar that is come is God Himself. Now distinguish the deserving from the undeserving. Would you rate God as undeserving? Who are you and who am I to distinguish one from the other. I do not see there is much to consider. For me he is God'." And then Vinoba observes, "I have not to this day found a fitting reply to what mother said in meeting my objection."

Instances such as these could be multiplied. But that is unnecessary. She died rather young in 1918 a victim to the influenza scourge.

In childhood Vinaba was most unruly. He had possibly in him an extra dose of surplus energy that led him to monkeyish tricks which often invited a fastidious father's birch. But morally Vinayak was all right, all high.

Father Narahari secured a diploma in dyeing from the Maharaja Gaekwad's Kala Bhavan. He belonged to the first batch of students. He served for some time in the dyeing department of the Buckingham Mills. British India khaki was a contribution of Kala Bhavan. In order to give his children

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

proper education Narhari left the Buckingham Mills job and shifted to Baroda as a head-clerk in State Government service. Narahari was a man of modern outlook and had a bias for industrial education.

Up to sixth standard Vinayak always stood first. He then lost interest in routine studies, and passed his examinations somehow. Nevertheless his store of knowledge kept increasing in volume. He was selective in his studies, things enduring appealing rather than things transient. A great Sanskrit scholar, he was not read *Sakuntala*. Mathematics and philosophy were his favourite subjects. Of mathematics only recently (*Sarvodaya*, March 1952) he wrote, "Next to God if I love anything best it is mathematics." And mathematical precision marks all his actions as *anasakta* actions enjoined by the Gita should be. A marvellous memory aided by selective studies laid the foundation of his profound scholarship. Vinoba had French for his second language. His father had a mind to send him to Europe.

In those days there was no spiritual or ascetic trend in him. Politics drew him. And politics then meant getting rid of the British. It was partition days then. Chiplunker and Tilak were his heroes. Young Vinayak and friends started a Vidyarthi Mandal which might any day become a bombthrowers' association.

Vinoba was to appear in I.A. examination in 1916. Ostensibly he left for Bombay for the purpose, but went to Calcutta and thence to Banaras, where he saw Gandhi first. He joined Mahatma's Ashram.

Gandhi wrote about him thus :

". . . He is a Sanskrit scholar. He joind the Ashram almost at its inception. He was among the first members. In order to better qualify himself he took one year's leave to prosecute further studies in Sanskrit. And practically at the same hour at which he had left the Ashram a year before he walked into it without notic. I had forgotten that he was to arrive that day.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

He has taken part in every menial activity of the Ashram from scavenging to cooking. Though he has a marvellous memory and is a student by nature, he has devoted the largest part of his time to spinning in which he has specialized as very few have... Being a born teacher he has been of the utmost assistance to Asha Devi in her development of the scheme of education through handicrafts.

". .He is responsible for producing a young man who has dedicated himsalf to the service of lepers."

The above, Gandhi wrote introducing Vinoba to the public as the first individual Satyagrahi.

"In 1917, when Mr. Andrews was at the Ashram," wrote Mahadev Desai in Harijan, October 20, 1940, "I remember Gandhiji describing to him Vinoba in these terms : 'He is one of the few pearls in the Ashram. They do not come, like others, to be blessed by the Ashram, but to bless it, not to receive, but to give."

Did he not get anything in return from the Ashram? Let Mahadev say. In *Young India* of 1923 he wrote :

". . .Though Gandhiji said that he had gone in the Ashram to give and not to receive, this is what Vinoba has said in a talk : 'Only I can know what I have got in the Ashram. It was an early ambition of mine to distinguish myself by a violent deed in the service of the country. But Bapu cured me of that ambition. It is he who extinguished the volcano of anger and other passions in me. I have been progressing every day of my life in the Ashram. Every years I have been making one of the *Mahabratas* my own."

Vinoba was not keeping well in the Ashram. He got one year's leave. He went to Wai, a health resort in Satara District. Wai is a sacred place, a beauty-spot on the Krishna river, and at the foot of the Mahabaleshwar hills. There the Bhaves of Gagoda have a temple dedicated of Shankara. At the time Narayan Shastri Marhatta, a great Sanskrit scholar, had his

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Prajna Pathshala there. During his stay at Wai, Vinoba took lessons from the Shastri not as a regular but a casual student.

Marathi is his mother language. Besides Sanskrit and Pali, Vinoba knows English, French, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil, Telugu and possibly Kanarese and Oriya. At Sevapuri he opened his talk with Sarvodaya Sevaks from Bengal with a Bengali sentence : "I do follow Bengali, but can't speak it." He is learning Bengali. He learns the languages of the people of India, because he wants to appeal straight to their heart, which you never can, unless you do skeak to them in their own. And this also induced him to learn Arabic, the language of the Koran the sacred book of Muslims, our neighbours. And he has a peculiar language sense. He will detect in your speech flaws of language, even is be that his acquaintance with your language is of the slightest. His language is simple and direct. The words he chooses are appropriate and are such as any one would understand. There is no verbiage in him. He has a rare economy in the use of words. The following excerpt from him will give an idea of the literary skill he prizes :

"Choose every word carefully. For, if the words you choose are not appropriate, your expression instead of being substantial may be just airy. Some words carry inadequate sense, some more than the adequate, and some again have contrary connotations. One must avoid all these three defects and express a thing exactly as it takes shape in the mind."

Gandhi initiated the people into truth and non-violence, and through them (Satyagraha) gave India political freedom. It has been left to Vinoba to initiate the people into *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *asteya* (non stealing) and through them (Sarvodaya) to construct the other half of India's freedom—economic independence.

"Shri Vinoba saw that the root of the malady of the present world lay in its faith in money. It was therefore necessary to depose Money, the symbol of possession (and of power, if we are permitted to add) from its sovereignity over life. After deep

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

reflection accompanied with fast, Shri Vinoba made a resolve not to accept money gifts. And there never was with him a question of earning money.

Labour and money are the two forces in the world. In order to escape from labour one has to lay by money. As long as money occupies the place of pride, labour cannot attain dignity, however much it may improve in its quality and volume. Vinoba has deposed money and raised the dignity of labour. Only after bringing about this transformation in his own person has Vinoba earned for himself the right to preach non-possession, i.e. curtailing one's possession] of wealth. And owners of land have supplied the proof that the Indian nation has not forgotten its ancient tradition of being influenced by the higher law—the law of spirit."—Kaka Kalelker.

At Paramdham Pavnar, Vinoba's Ashram, they produce by body-labour primary necessities of life. They forgo for the time being the use of any such item they need but have not produced. They do not go to market for it. Vinoba defines this effort to depose money, the realization of this ideal as *Samyayoga*. And his *Bhoo-dan yajna* is an extension of this ideal to society, for without returning lands to the tillers of the soil, there is no doing away with the sway of wealth. Vinoba attributes his achievements in Telengana and Uttar Pradesh to this experiment of his at Paramdham Pavnar. He says also :

> "But for that experiment, I might not have the confidence which marked all my actions; but for that I might not have shed my timidity and my shyness might have persisted. Then too, the labour I put on good earth acknowledging the cultivator as my *guru*, has given me a humility I never have had."

Vinoba was not what he is today. According to Tukoji Maharaj, the celebrated Bhajan-singer from Maharashtra, Vinoba was not accessible. He says :

> "God is for the good of all. What was Bapu if he was not God? Today revered Vinoba has become god. Vinoba was

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

not what he is today. His was a secluded life. He did not meet any one, nor did he talk to anybody. Had Bapu been with us today you would not have found Vinoba going from village to village. He talked at you, never talked to you. He has now come to realize that seclusion, cold reserve does not pay. He now addresses people as brother, as cousin. To some he says he is his brother, to some other he says he is his son. Who will say this Vinoba is that Vinoba? Father gone, the son has now to shoulder the burden. Now Vinoba to us is what Bapu was to us then. After Gandhi's death he has become as loving as he."

With all his humility—he ends his speeches and letters with *Vinoba ke pranam* (Vinoba's salutation)—a little ruggedness seems still to persist in him, which time and his daily increasing contact with people will round off. Or it may be, he retains something of the old reserve that is mistaken by casual visitors as ruggedness. The character of that reserve is revealed from the following written by Mahadev Desai in *Young India* of 1917.

"You may stay days and days wish him without knowing him and even when you know him you only begin to know him. You meet with a reserve which you cannot easily break. He does not talk much, rarely does he say anything about himself. And yet if you could get at the bottom of his profound depths you are sure to exclaim, "Nowhere have I struck such treasures."

The Gita has been and is his guide. He turns to it at every corner for direction and he gets it. The Gita sustains him, gives him energy, gives him drive. In his own words :

"I have no words to explain the place the Gita occupies in my life. It has done me infinite good." And again,

"In all my actions the Gita has been my guide, as it is today. It has always given me peace of mind, energy and wisdom. Whenever I needed an incentive or the drive to do a thing, it came from the Gita."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

And what, according to Vinoba, the Gita teaches if that can at all be given in so few words? To him the Gita does not emphasize action alone, or devotion alone, or realization alone. Neither would he accept the opposite view which regards it as an amalgam of the three. A little of all the three has also no appeal for him. That it is a gradual progress from action to devotion and from devotion to realization is neither acceptable to him. Nor does he like the view that seeks to reconcile the three. "I would rather say", he writes in his commentary, "what is action is devotion and what is devotion is realization."

Vinoba's *Gitai* is a good seller. Of it Mahadevbhai wrote : "He has produced a Marathi translation of the Gita in parallel verse which reproduces the haunting music of the original in an amazing degree and hundred thousand copies of it have been sold in Maharashtra." His *Gita-pravachan* in Hindi, a translation from the original in Marathi, has gone through five editions, number of copies running to sixty-six thousand.

Now a brief reference to his work that is just now before the public and that has given him publicity.

Establishment of equality, to bring about Sarvodaya (the greatest good of *all*, and not the greatest good of the greatest number) is the object of *Bhoodan yajna* which Vinoba has called his five-year plan. Vinoba says :

> "Now that political freedom has been attained, we have to work for the establishment of equality. I have called that Sarvodaya. You may, if you like, call that Samyayogo or Sarvodaya. It is for the establisment of this Sarvodaya that I have been going from village to village.
>
> "I call this my five-year plan. If all of you take up this work for the next five years and during that time succeed in transferring five crore acres of land, then a great non-violent revolution has taken place in India."

It is a historical necessity.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"What I am doing is not against the trend of history. You have to recognize that what has not happened before may happen. Russian revolution had had no precedent, yet it came. So too this may come about. Whatever that may be, what I am doing is not against history, but is a historical necessity."

Vinoba does not beg, he initiates.

"I demand land", Vinoba says, "as of right on behalf of the poor. I do not beg it of you. I say I am here to initiate you into the right conduct".

For, "if the thirsty do not get clean water to drink, they quench their thirst with foul water."

His is the third way, the non-violent one.

"A great revolution is taking shape in India. I see it before me. Russia passed through a kind of revolution. America is passing through a second kind. I have observed them both. Either of them is foreign to the culture and genius of India."

India's is the third way, with its embryo in the *Bhoo-dan yajna*. Vinoba is confident of success. And his confidence—confidence of a man who has reduced himself to a zero, speaks :

"Those who do not give me land today, will give tomorrow. They cannot but give. There is none who may refuse me."

Vinoba is resolute. It is always "do or die" with him. Appealing to all for support he says :

> "I invite you all to work for this revolution. I seek to revolutionize thought, revolutionize the means. The sages say, youths delight in new creation, new mission. Here is a mission for them, a new world to create."

Vinoba is beginning to draw the masses as Gandhi did. He is forging a tremendous sanction. It is us to make it compelling. When it is, the people straying away from Gandhian way, shall walk back. Or there is struggle. And struggle will only add to Vinoba's stature.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In the United States, a question often put to me was, now that Gandhiji had gone, is there any one who can take his place in India? On my return I find to my delight the nearest to an answer. Vinoba Bhave is providing that *ahimsa*, or the principle of love, when applied to human affairs, has still the power which Gandhiji claimed for it.

Unlike Gandhiji, Vinoba who is still in his fifties, is a scholar. Gandhiji's acquaintance with the Indian classics was slight, while Vinoba is well versed in Sanskrit and is soaked in the wisdom of our past. Gandhiji represented the soul of India instinctively. In Vinoba we have Gandhiji's instinct supplemented by almost unbelievable knowledge of the best thought of India through the ages.

The difference in the nature of these two men accounts for the fact that though both have the same convictions and the same moral fervour, Gandhiji has become a world figure while Vinoba is practically unknown. Gandhiji was essentially a public man, interesting himself in activities which brought him into contact with important persons in every walk of life, while Vinoba is by nature a recluse who shrinks from publicity. His interests are scholarly and, when they include people, are confined to those immediately around him. At the same time it is non-violence or love which is his gospel like that of Gandhiji. Let us see how it has expressed itself in Vinoba's life.

His non-violence or love has led him to take interest in all religions. He has studied the scriptures of the important religions of the world, more especially Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Islam and Christianity. Not content with reading the Koran in translation, he went to the trouble of learning Arabic, just to be able to study the Koran in the original. His knowledge of Bible, especially of the Gospels, is astounding. He can quote chapter and verse, and can interest Jesus' life and teachings with greater understanding than many Christian theologians under whom I have studied. In his study of other

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

religions, his doctrine of love makes him look for their merits rather than for their defects.

His own language is Marathi, but besides it and Sanskrit he has studied Persian, Arabic, English and most of the living languages of India, including Bengali, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Kanarese. In fact, language study used to be one of his occupations during his 1942-45 imprisonment. Early in the morning, one could hear him reciting aloud in Tamil in his bath some of the poems of the Tamil poet, Bharati. His love recognises no cultural or language barriers. To him the thoughts of all people are equally lovable.

He is an accurate student of history and civilisation, and has very penetrating knowledge of the evolution of ideas and institutions in India and elsewhere, including western countries. His views about the West are generally sympathetic, balanced and objective.

He knows no communal prejudice. In fact, if anything he is more critical of his own community in regard to communal conflicts than of other communities. A few days ago, he said in his tour through Telengana that Pakistan was really the outcome of Hindu aloofness and the attitude of untouchability amongst Hindus to the followers of other religions, rather than due to any teaching of Islam itself. Such self-criticism follows directly from his doctrine of love, which teachers that we must not look for faults in others, but first and foremost seek the fault in ourselves and remove it, for it our conduct is right and proper, our opponent will cease to be our opponent and become our ally.

Vinoba makes no distinction between caste or outcast, rich or poor. His love makes him want to serve the most despised. So his heart went out to the leper, and he induced one of his workers to dedicate himself completely to the service of lepers.

Like Gandhiji, Vinoba believes in the method of non-violence or love in the political sphere, not as a matter of expediency, but as a creed. Therefore it was that Gandhiji

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

initiated his movements of individual Civil Disobedience in 1940 with Vinoba as the first representative of the people's protest against the war. He described Vinoba then as the ideal satyagrahi or one who came nearest to embodying in his own life and thought the ideal of non-violence or love.

But Vinoba's heart is really not in politics as such, but with the down-trodden masses of our land. Therefore, he is content to bury himself in a few villages. His idea is to make villagers self-dependent, capable of managing their a ffairs themselves and safeguarding their own interests, for non-violence cannot tolerate control and exploitation of villages by outside agencies. To bring this about, Vinoba believes that villages have to become more or less economically self-sufficient, producing as far as possible all that they require for themselves, especially in the way of the necessities of life. That means paying special attention to agriculture and village industries.

Symbolic of this movement to enable the villager to stand on his own legs and to revise village economic life, is hand-spinning which Gandhiji organized throughout the country. Vinoba took to spinning avidly and brought his scholarly, painstaking and investigating mind to bear on it, and became an expert in the art himself and wrote a text-book on Hand-spinning as a Basic Craft for teachers of basic education.

In addition to all this, course, is the need under a philosophy of love for people to live together in peace and unity and to co-operate with each other for each other's good. Vinoba never tires of trying to achieve such unity and co-operation in the villages where he has set up for work.

All these activities are included in the movement for Sarvodaya founded by Gandhiji for the full development of all members of society, none being excluded, rich or poor, capable, or incapable strong or weak. The doctrine of love enjoins that none are to be exterminated or eliminated, but all are to develop side by side for the common good of all. And Vinoba is out to establish such a scheme of things in the villages.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

As over against this, Communism preaches class-hatred and violent extermination of the propertied classes. It has established itself in Telengana in Hyderabad State. Vinoba decided to put his non-violent philosophy of Sarvodaya to test in this Communist-ridden area, and went there as a messenger of peace and non-violence. His life was in danger but he refused police protection. He interviewed Communist leaders in jail and outside, and told them that he was as anxious as they to reach the Communist goal of freedom from oppression and exploitation for common man, but that the only way of achieving this end was through non-violence. He pleaded with them, therefore, as their sympathiser and friend to give up their methods of violence. He toured the villages and soon saw that if Communism had entrenched itself in them it was only because big landlords many of whom owned 10,000 acres of land each, kept the land to themselves and exploited the labour of landless peasants. The only solution, Vinoba was convinced, was to distribute the land to the cultivators. But how was this to be done? The Communists did it by preaching hatred against the landlord and inciting the peasant to murder, loot, burn and forcibly take possession of the land. This orgy of crime has been costing the State's exchequer Rs. 50 million annually. But what Vinoba armed with nothing but his message of love, did was to appeal to these landlords on the basis of justice and brotherhood to donate their lands to the peasants. He covered nearly 450 miles of rough country on foot, visiting almost 300 villages in about six weeks in the fierce midsummer heat of July 1951 and won the hearts of both rich and poor by his transparent sincerity, selflessness, and faith in man's sense of justice, and love. People thronged around him, and drank in what he had to say. He appealed to the best in them, whether they were landlord, peasant or Communist. Emaciated, dressed in a loin-cloth, living on little else than curds, and trudging on foot from three in the morning, he impressed the people as a man of God, seeking nothing for himself, but undergoing suffering that they may live happily in love and unity. Such redeeming love could not go in vain. Central to his mission was his prayer-meeting, where people saw that his life and teaching were rooted in religion.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

That was enough. India's masses, rich and poor, trained through the centuries to respect non-violence, self-renunication and religion, responded, and it is reported that actually 10,112 acres of land were freely donated by the landlords by the end of his tour. Vinoba has appointed a three-man committee to distribute this land among the cultivators each peasant family to receive roughly one acre of wet land and five acres of dry land. And in regard to land forcibly seized by the Communist he has declared that these should be given back to the landlords, who should voluntarily give them to the peasants. The virtue of this method is that it is twice blessed. It blesses him who gives and him who receives. Both landlord and peasant are united once more and co-operate with each other for their mutual advantage. It seems too good to be true. And yet it has happened. Truth is stranger than fiction.

Gandhiji applied the law of love with phenomenal success in the political sphere, and India achieved her freedom from foreign rule non-violently. Now Vinoba is applying it in the economic sphere, showing that it can yield phenomenal results there also to free the weak from the strong. He has proved by results that people do respond to an appeal to their reason and conscience. So it is not necessary to resort to violence as Communism does. Indeed the only way to achieve a permanent solution of problems of human conflict is through love and appeal to the highest in man. When this is effectively done, the erstwhile opponent is converted and becomes one's best helper and friend. It is India's answer, based on centuries of aspiration after non-violence, to Russian communism and appears to be full of promise for effectively overcoming the Communist menace all over the world and for turning hate to love, and strife to peace. This is the epoch-making significance of what this humble devotee of non-violence, following the footsteps of Gandhiji, has done in a remote corner of our land.

(Bharatan Kumarappa)

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

4

The Legacy

Vinoba Bhave's contribution in the freedom movement is most unique in the annals of our sub-continent. Born in a middle class family, he showed no interest in the college education and joined Gandhi's ashram as one of his ardent devotee. His devotion attracted Gandhi so much that he selected Vinoba Bhave as the first Satyagrahi during the Individual Satyagraha in 1940. It was the second year of the second global war. Gandhi explained his choice thus :

In a few chosen phrases Gandhiji has explained why he has selected Vinoba as the first Satyagrahi. It is impossible to improve on that thumb-nail sketch. But it may not be in-appropriate to add a few more facts about his busy life, in which all the twenty-four hourse of the day have been given to activity of prayerful service which alone, in his opinion, can take one to self-realization. It is this that makes of his sacrifice 'a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God'.

Vinoba has translated his principles into pratice, pressed all his philosophy and mathematics into the aid of the constructive programme which he has believed to be the external symbol of non-violence. He has trained under him students who are masters of the science and art of khadi-making, he has trained workers who have been content with a miserable pittance to busy themselves in villages working the constructive programme,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

and he has given, as Gandhiji has said, an ideal servant to the lepers. 'Proficiency in all action' is the Gita's definition of *yoga*, and everything that Vinoba has done proves that he is one who has mastered that *yoga*. An ideal spinner, both on the wheel and the *takli* and with both the left and the right hands, he is an ideal village-worker. Though highly intellectual, the villagers feel completely at home with him and are enraptured by his simple perfervid eloquence, full of telling homely parables and illustrations. He has produced a Marathi translation of the *Gita* in parallel verse which reproduces the haunting music of the original in an amazing degree, and over a hundred copies of it have been sold in Maharashtra. While carrying on in the village of Pavnar the experiment of the standard spinning wage, he found time to devote five hours each day to the study of the *Quran* in the original, and when yesterday Gandhiji asked him to repeat '*Al Fateha*' before the Maulana he did so with a pronunciation and intonation which the Maulana said were flawless.

It is to such a one that the honour has come of being the first stayagrahi in a campaign that Gandhiji will strive to make the most unsullied from the point of view of non-violence. To be chosen for the honour is a great thing; to have been chosen without having ever desired it is greater still.

When Vinoba made his first speech at Pavnar on 17 October 1940, the Government did not arrest him. He went on repeating his speech on the subsequent days at Surgaon, Seloo, and Deoli. It was only on the fourth day that Vinoba was arrested and sentenced to three months' simple imprisonment. Here is a gist of Vinoba's statement before the District Court in Wardha on being charged with anti-war propaganda :

I plead guilty to the charge that I have propagated against the War in my speeches. I have done it with full understanding and with a purpose. I, however, do not agree that I have committed any crime. In fact, I regard it as my sacred duty. I have full faith in non-violence and I have spent most of my life in various constructive activities like khadi, communal unity, service of the Harijans, basic education through crafts, and

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

cow protection, which are based on non-violence. If a person like me takes upon himself the responsibility of offering satyagraha against the Government in this delicate situation, it is only because he regards it as his inescapable and pious duty.

On his release after the three-month period, Vinoba offered satyagraha again. This time he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment. When he offered satyagraha the third time after his release, the Government sent him to jail for full one year. During all these three terms of imprisonment, Vinoba was kept in Nagpur jail, along with other individual satyagrahis, whose numbers went on swelling from month to month.

The authorities of Nagpur jail were quite considerate to Vinoba and took every care to provide him with the necessary amenities permitted under the rules. He was given the type of food that suited him. He was also allowed to take with him a limited number of books for study. A special light was set up in his cell for reading purposes.

After his release from the Nagpur Jail, Vinoba got himself engaged in the constructive work. He also toured South India during early 1942 in connection with the Hindi Prachar movement. On 8 August 1942, when Gandhi gave a call for the commencement, of Quit Indian Movement, Vinoba once again offered his services. He was arrested and was detained in Wardha, Nagpur, Vellore, and Seoni Jails.

On the very first, day, after his arrest at Pavnar Vinoba was taken to Wardha jail, before being sent to Nagpur and Vellore. On entering the prison gates, Vinoba told the jailor : "I have had my food for the day, and from tomorrow morning I go on an indefinite fast." The jailor was naturally shocked and greately worried. He thought that he had, perhaps, committed a serious mistake.

"Kindly let me know why you have decided to adopt this unusual course," asked the jailor.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"Nothing in connection with your jail. Gandhiji had decided to begin fast soon after his arrest, and I shared his decision."

During the period of his detention at Vellore, Vinoba spent most of his time in spinning and the study of the four South Indian languages, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa used to teach him these Dravidian languages and Vinoba, in turn, taught *Tulsidas, Ramayana* to Bharatanji. Vinoba also delivered a series of lectures on the *Gita* for the benefit of the other political prisoners at Vellore.

From Vellore, Vinoba desired to write a letter to Gandhiji. The jail authorities did not allow him to do so because Gandhiji was not strictly a relation of his. Vinoba, therefore, informed the jail superintendent : "I have no other relation who is so intimately connected with me as Mahatma Gandhi. If I am not allowed to write to him, I shall not write to anybody else." And so, for the full term of his detention Vinoba did not write any letter to anyone.

Along with other leaders, Vinoba was released early in May 1944 from the Seoni jail. He returned straight to Wardha and rejoined his creative work, first at Gopuri. He started a community kitchen as an experiment in *Samya-yoga* or Sarvodaya. After some time, he left Pavnar.

George Weller called him India's Walking Messiah and greately appreciates his socio-economic programme which he had launched for the upliftment of the weaker sections of our society. His was the missionary work which he performed with zeal and discipline. He always wished to do as much as he could to give land to the landless so that he could work there for his honourable livelihood.

At three o'clock every morning, in some dark village of India, the slumber of the poor is broken by a series of strange noises. Tweleve handclaps, dry and commanding, echo through the labyrinth of mud houses where men and animals sleep. A

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

little bell tinkles. Then twenty pairs of sandals move out, slip-slapping among the houses. A kerosene lantern winks by. Presently, when the shuffling sandals are gone, there drift back the notes of a hymn of peace, sung in marching rhythm. Vinoba Bhave, India's walking messiah, and his disciples have taken to the road again.

Vinoba is fifty-seven. A duodenal ulcer is gnawing at his stomach, and dysentery plagues his daily journey of fifteen to twenty miles. Somewhere among the thousands of villages awaiting him is one where he will lie down for ever. When he does, the Communist Party will be relieved of its most formidable unarmed antagonist in Asia, perhaps in the world; for Vinoba has undertaken single-handed a programme of redistributing India's land. Already Indian landowners have given him nearly 50,000 acres, often in single acres or fractions, though his only weapons are moral suasion and his own prestige as a mahatma, a "great soul."

Vinoba does not badger the landowners, as the Communists do, before a mob of land-hungry peasants streed by a claque of party members. When he arrives at a village he calls the landowners together quietly, under a tree or by a brook, and they are surprised and mollified at being invited to express their views to him privately. He listens closely, lying at full length like a withered Caesar, a brown skinny shoulder exposed, supporting himself on one elbow. "We are sorry, but we cannot help you," the land owners mutter, between pious fear and indignant martyrdom. "We simply cannot sphere any land." "I have three sons and only twenty acres. Do not expect me to cut off my sons to help out some stranger." Experience has taught Vinoba how to handle this objection. Patting the farmer on the shoulder, he says quietly, "Consider me as your fourth son. Father, I am asking you for my own share, no more." The idea of having a mahatma in the family is almost irresistible, even to a hardboiled farmer. Then Vinoba speaks confidentially of his belief that rich and poor are brothers, quoting Sanskrit wisdom on the uses of properly and proverbs on the virtue of giving.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The quiet meeting with the landowners lasts usually an hour or so, and ends in a gentlemanly deadlock. The landowners politely shall off a decision. Nobody wants to break the common front by giving anything. "All right," says Vinoba. "So be it. Tomorrow I shall be gone and you will all keep your land. But I warn you : trouble is ahead." A long, painful silence follows, Vinoba lying on his back with his eyes closed, the owners trying to read each other's faces. "We have so little now," mourns one. Vinoba snaps upright : "You have little, but others have less." His nurse brings him his collapsible spinning wheel in its case like a trombone, and he sets it up and begins spinning. The owners shuffle away.

But they are still not free of Vinoba. Indians are proud. Can a mahatma be permitted to walk on to the next village and avow the fact—which will reach there hours before him—that the rich here are both impious and mean? There is another, more local danger. In the public meeting an hour hence, when Vinoba appears before the whole village, not just the same landowners, some little two-acre man, mesmerized by Vinoba or simply mischievous, may rise and give away a sixth of his puny holdings. Then how will the great ones look? Anyone who holds village office by virtue of landed eminence will seem indifferent to his local good name. It is necessary to give Vinoba something—a token, say.

By the time the public meeting opens the landowners have put their heads to-gether behind a tree and scrapped to-gether a few acres. Hoping Vinoba will stay at safe distance, they send him a message that they will "help him," without mentioning any figures. Sometimes they resort to floral flattery to get him on the road sooner. "Have I come for garlands?" demands Vinoba. "I have a garden if I want a bouquet. Tell me how much land you will give." He walks nervously around in a circle of squatting farmers, with their wives and children. He denounces nobody. Does any small farmer want to set an example to the rich? One or two hands are timidly elevated.

The substantial landowners now see themselves outflanked.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

When they break down, their answer is usually the one I heard give to Vinoba in the United Provinces. "We cannot actually spare you on inch of land. But because you are a mahatma, we cannot let you leave us empty-handed."

Yet Vinoba somehow leaves the farmers with a sense of having solved their own troubles, respectably and independently. The rich, because they have given "voluntarily," are ennobled and dignified. The poor have a divided gratitude—to the departed Vinoba, to the remaining rich, and to God, whom Vinoba summons to witness and sanctify the gift.

Being a practical saint, Vinoba is not satisfied with the almighty registrar of deeds. He also ties up giver and getter with a regular lawful deed, signed and humanly witnessed. Knowing the poor man's temptation to make an easy rupee, Vinoba nails down the new owner with a clause forbidding transfer for ten years. He has even squeezed the state into a little giving. The farmers are exempt from the three percent transfer tax. And if the land has been waste and the farmer clears and plants it within two years, he pays no taxes.

"When you awaken tomorrow I shall be gone. But in reality I shall still be with you," he tells his villages. He is, too. He leaves helpers behind with the villagers, in joint committee, to see that the land is fairly handed out, with preference for the landless and the untouchables. He keeps his rear guard alert. "People know loopholes in any law better than the lawmakers themselves," he warns them. Gandhi, who never was fooled by Vinoba's self-depreciation, once said : "He has an army of disciples and workers who would rise to any sacrifice at his bidding." To lock the stitches after Vinoba has passed is no petty task, because on one pilgrimage in northern India he averaged 285 acres a day, and on another in Hyderabad he averaged 200 acres a day.

Vinoba's method has this drawback : it hits the man with middle-sized holdings but not the large absentee owner. Among 563 donors in Madhya Pradesh, 541 gave less than 25 acres and only thirteen over a hundred. Vinoba has not worked out any

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

sure way of getting at the remote rich. The best he can do is to sour the lesser landowners against them, and thereby increase the tension on their local overseers. Some day he may enter the cities, which he calls a "jungle of brutes", and hunt down the big owners.

However, only the rich—and—obscure dare go undergound in the cities when Vinoba approaches; the rich—and—prominent must line up humbly to be plundered by the apostle. At Delhi, the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, entered shoeless the grass shack erected by the Government for Vinoba beside the memorial—altar—where Gandhi was cremated, and invited Vinoba to help himself to his estates in Bihar.

"People want a revolutionary programme," he tells India, "and think that a revolution cannot be wrought without bloodshed. I cannot accept their contention. They are not revolutionsts at all. They are status-quo-ists. Their object is not a revolution, but to cause an exchange of places between the present happy and unhappy one. A revolution must signify universal happiness without exception. While the Western mind is trained to think in terms of the greatest good of the greatest number, the Indian mind from childhood is taught to think in terms of the good of all.

For the harassed Nehru the emergence of Vinoba has been a piece of sublime good luck. He holds the Communists at bay while the Congress Party stumbles towards a formula in the confusion of a cloudy socialist leadership. He comes along just in time to take over where Patel, the Tammany boss of India, left off. Patel, a heavy-lidded bullfrog who ran the Congress machine, was death on Communism. He even rebuked Sheikh Abdulla, Nehru's friend and dictator of Kashmir, when that tall rebel took the Communist side in speeches about Korea. But Patel died, and the Congress Government was left without a figure tough enough and uncompromised enough internationally to meet the menace of armed uprising.

Vinoba showed how the job could be done. He did it

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

without help from his own Government, a Government obsessed with forcing Communist China into the UN and giving Formosa to the Communists. Starting two years late, Vinoba saved Hyderabad, the Kansas of India, from being either seized by an army of Communist rebels or wrecked by anti-Communist posses of landlord-dominated state government. But for Vinoba, Hyderabad today might be a Communist fortress in the middle of India.

The Communist plan to capture India is unusual. Unlike other national Communist parties with borders adjacent to China and near Russia, the Indian Communists count little on a ready-made victory handed them by a foreign Communist army. The Himalayas are too high, the passes too tight. The Indian Army command apparently has not been penetrated by Communists riding on the Kashmir issue, as the Pakistan staff was before it was purged. In India, the Communist plan is to organize farmers and landless labourers locally, and gradully to effect the dismemberment of the nation state by state. The crowbar is "the right of secession"—a privilege which has been guaranteed, with great propaganda foresight, in the constitution of the USSR, though of course never invoked there.

This plan of winning India by amputation is a special strategy adapted to Indian conditions. India does not have enough industrial workers to furnish the street-fighting militia of Communism. Nor does she have Communist guerrillas left over from war, like those of China and South-east Asia, because her nationl army got first grip on the British guns and grenades. But she has millions of farmers. The Communist aim is to shape them through local bands of night raiders into that missing guerrilla force, creating a kind of Ku Klux Klan of Communism.

The state selected for the first attempt at power was Hyderabad. With a Moslem prince ruling a Hindu population, Hyderabad had been taken forcibly into the Indian Union by an invasion of the Indian Army "to preserve order." Its people were theoretically ready for a Communist call to break away

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

again. Hyderabad also looked promising for a class war, because the rich landowners were squeezing the sharecroppers unmercifully. The poor were sunk not only in hunger but drunkenness, rarely a Hindu vice.

Hoping for a quick capture of the weakened state, the Communists shortened the opening phase of "peaceful" enrolment and jumped straight into a semi-underground offensive. They distributed arms obtained in the melee of civil war with a simple programme : "Arrest the landlords. Seize the Government." While the Indian Federal Army stayed aloof, the Hyderabad state constabulary became locked in a struggle with the Communist night raiders. In one province, Telengana, the Communists won. They arrested the landlords, killed a few, and distributed their lands. They set up their own police, schools, and tax collectors. They killed their "enemies" and sniped away at the state troopers.

Then they intensified their sermons of secession around the whole clockface of India : in Travancore in the south-west, among the Sikhs, of the north-west, among the Gurkha tea workers on the Tibetan border near Darjeeling, among the Naga hillmen of Assam, and the Dravidian peoples of eastern India. In Assam they even succeeded in promoting a cheap diversion simultaneously with the main show in Hyderabad.

When Vinoba decided last March to walk into Communist Hyderabad there was much guesswork as to whether he would be killed or converted. The Communist favoured giving the lands of the rich to the poor. So did Vinoba. An alliance seemed in the making. In Iran the Communist Tudeh party had wrapped up the elderly Moslem high priest Ayatollah Kashani by the simple process of flattering him with the grand-old-man technique. Their Indian comrades might do the same with Vinoba. After all, even Gandhi had declared himself a Communist, though one who adjured the party's "secret, violent, and deceitful methods."

Another tie between Vinoba and the Communists was that

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

many of them were in jail as political criminals, and Vinoba had spent four years in jail himself. Indeed, for many years jail has been the place to being a career of leadership in India. Old Congress rebels, now paunchy bureaucrats, used to hold parties to celebrate "the anniversary of my jail-going." Moreover, Vinoba was at the time disgusted with wasteful governmental methods, and he knew that official attempts at land reform in Hyderabad had been bungled in such a way that many farmers had joined the Communists.

But from the beginning Vinoba felt that India was bigger and deeper than any foreign doctrine. He looked at the Communists coolly. "Before the Moslem soldier came to India with his sword," he said, "the fakir came with his teaching." Capitalism and imperialism came from the West and their touch on India was "both bitter and sweet." Similarly today, he felt, "The new thought currents like socialism and Communism have arrived from the West and they have come to stay.....Indian culture will lose nothing thereby. The scum will be washed off and new culture produced".

Ever since Gandhi's murder, Vinoba admitted latter, he had been watching the Communist efforts to take Hyderabad. "I confess that the incendiary and murderous activities did not unnerve me, because I know that the birth of a new culture has always been accompanied in the past by blood baths. What is needed is not to get panicky, but to keep our heads cool and find a peaceful means of resolving the conflict. The police are not expected to think out and institute reforms. To clear a jungle of tigers their employment would be useful. But here we have to deal with human beings, however mistaken and misguided. When a new idea is born, new repression cannot Combat it."

Vinoba drew some of the martyrdom from the Communist prisoners by immediately visiting them in jail at Warangal. They demanded that he work for their release. Drawing on his own experience in jail, Vinoba said : "The thing you must do is keep busy. Ask the officials, as we used to ask the British, for work to keep yourself healthy." He visited his own former jail at

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Dhulia, where the Communists were excused from labour. "Ask for more work for your hands," was his stern advice.

Vinoba told the Communists that they had bungled their reform by terrorism. "Do you think the ideas of the rich have been changed?" he asked. "Not at all. They have simply deceived you." By violent change at gunpoint, Vinoba explained, the Communists had called down the brutal reaction by state troopers. They had wrecked their own reforms.

Then Vinoba began walking out into the villages to find out if there was another way than the Communist gun for getting land for the land-hungry. The first job, he found, was not to wheedle land but to calm the frightened farmers. Villages numbering hundreds of families had been terrified by a handful of armed night raiders. At Puchapalli he found a populace of 3,000 totally controlled by a dozen armed Communists, who had killed twenty. At Vavilapalli a young man put their dilemma before Vinoba : "Communist guerrilla ask us for food. If we refuse, they theaten us with death. If we submit, the police threaten us with punishment. What shall we do?"

"Be fearless," replied Vinoba. "If someone enters your home forcibly for food, there is no duty laid on you to comply with him."

"Yes, but then they will kill us. Are we supposed to invite death?"

"Death is an inevitability, and if God wills it today it cannot be postponed. But if they have no sanction from above, the Communists, whatever their number and however deadly their weapons, are powerless to inflict harm. You must give up the fear of death.....Those who fear deat , have ceased to live. They are dead already. Bare your chests when the enemy comes to us with a gun. He is a brother and we must have pity on him. Face him with complete equanimity and tell him he can kill and take away whatever he likes."

Nobody has tried this method of meeting Communists in

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Asia. In the Western onlooker it arouses skepticism and ridicule, and a little even in the Indian. But not so long ago there was a whole generation of people, including Westernized Indians, to whom Gandhi appeared preposterous. Vinoba has developed methods different from Gandhi's against an enemy far more callous and indifferent to civil rights. Essentially, however, he is Gandhi's moral heir.

Gandhi used up all the moral oxygen in India and the British Raj suffocated. Vinoba is using the same method on the Communists. "The force of arms is no mach to the force of atma, the soul. But the Communists have no faith in atma; they believe only in force of arms. If they persist in their erroneous belief and in the violence it enjoins, they will meet their doom in India, for the people will cease to have any confidence in them."

In Hyderabad Vinoba pinned the guilt where it belonged. "Now that everyone has a right to vote," he said, "and the way is open to change the Government according to the will of the people, there is no necessity to resort to violent methods." Ceaselessly he invited the guerrillas to leave hiding and try legal contest through the ballot. "I say to the Communists only that they should stop coming at night. Take a lesson from me. Be bold. Come by daylight." They answered him with pamphlets of derision.

In one Hyderabad village Vinoba told the farmers he had wrung nearly 100 acres out of the past eight villages. "Today I am going to dispossess you, too, of some of your lands. The Communists will speak slightingly of it and say : 'How can it help if those who have 5,000 acres give away a hundred?' I advise them to be patient. An owner may give only a little. Yet what he gives, he gives with love. That is why I accept his gift. I know that the rest too shall come to me."

"The Communists dub me a simpleton. But I tell them that I know my trade. Let there be created an atmosphere, in however small a measure, an atmosphere that this kind of giving is

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

good for the community, for the rich as well as the poor. Then I shall take the next step and move for the necessary laws". At first he asked the villagers to make co-operatives of their new land, but soon discarded the experiment, "Co-operative farming," he decided, "requires a knowledge of arithmetic of which the villagers are innocent, and therefore frightened."

Vinoba's tactics gradually evolved into something more realistic than telling the farmers to submit bravely. He ended by relying on Gandhi's method with the British, countering firepower with numbers. "The night raiders are only a couple or so," he told the farmers. "But you are thousands. From your own volunteer corps to guard your villages. They must be trained to act efficiently. If you discard fear, the Communists will stop fighting you. Once they know the people are fearless, they will quit."

As Vinoba zig-zagged across Telengana, the night raiding bands began to break up. The midnight raps at the door, the barnyard executions, tapered off. The unjailed Communists began treating with the government through a front "progressive" party formed for the purpose. They adopted Vinoba's advice of running for election, naturally with no thanks to him. Many came down from the mountain arsenals. Even Vinoba does not attribute this change to his influence alone; he recognizes that Lenin's Maxim, "Combine legal and illegal methods," is still axiomatic. But Vinoba did halt the killing, mitigate the government repression, and bring the issue out into the fair arena of the ballot.

"If the Communists here," Vinoba told a village, "give up their faith in force of arms, they would find even me joining hands with them. I would then declare that I too am a Communist. But their technique till now has been to create dissensions in every village and set them fighting against each other. Mine is to unite and build them into an integrated community of love." Vinoba has not saved India from Communism yet, and he cannot save it alone. But very slowly he is showing India that there really is another way out.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

All this was done by a saintly scholar who had no previous experience in class war. Gandhi had passed over both Patel and Nehru to choose him to lead civil resistance against the British. But Vinoba had been long demobilized and was on the verge of being walled up in the Gandhian epoch. Some people, indeed, thought he was already dead.

Yet, by Indian standards, Vinoba had been pretty well prepared for his present work. Rebellion and self-sacrifice are in his blood. His grandfather had dared to bring untouchables into a Hindu temple. When Vinoba was a boy of ten, he took a vow of celibacy, gave up sweets, and began going barefoot. Though he later relapsed into wearing sandals against the burning surface of main highways, he still kicks them off as soon as he feels the country dust between his toes.

When he was twenty, Vinoba's parents packed him off to Bombay to be examined for university studies, but he jumped from the train and took another for Bengal, the cradle of rebels. He sent his parents a letter: "I do not go to Bombay. I go elsewhere. But wherever I shall go and whatever I shall do, please rest assured that I will not do anything against good morality."

He went to Banaras, studied Sanskrit, and ate at a free kitchen for the poor. In February, 1916, he saw Gandhi for the first time and was invited to visit his community at Sabarmati. When he came back to the university he gathered his philosophical theses and heaved then into the Ganges to mingle with the seaward-bound ashes of the cremated dead. Joining Gandhi at Sabarmati, he spent hours spinning thread, grinding corn, and listening to the sage. Gandhi wrote his parents : "Your son has developed unusual brilliancy of character and saintliness for his age."

Gandhi sent the young man to study under a religious teacher named Narayan Shastri. "Practise self-discipline and return to me in two years," Gandhi ordered. Vinoba reduced his clothing to a single garment. He cut out salt. He slept on the ground. Then he asked by mail for tests of his spiritual progress. Gandhi answered : "Your love and purity of character overwhelm me.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

I am incapable of testing you." When Vinoba at twenty-five placed himself again before Gandhi, the old leader adopted the young disciple as his son

At the time when Gandhi, being one generation ahead of Vinoba, was defying the British by his salt marches and other challenges, Vinoba was submerging himself in Hinduism, studying and preaching from the Bhagavad Gita, which is still his source. As Gandhi remarked, Vinoba was "never in the limelight on any political platform."

Vinoba aimed to liberate himself from money even more fully than Gandhi. Gandhi, to oil his various projects, had to accept cash contributions, but Vinoba kept himself outside the little Gandhi trusts. In life Gandhi benefited much from the aid of the industrialist Birla, but after the leader's death Vinoba strongly advised against calling upon the angel Birla for money again. He himself refuses cash gifts. A merchant without land offered him 1,000 rupees. Vinoba replied : "Go, buy some land for me. Or dig me a well. Or buy me bullocks to give away." No collection is taken at his meetings. All he and his dozen or so disciples accept for themselves is two meals and floor space in the school or village hall. He wants farmers to pay debts and taxes in kind, not money. Money annoys him by fluctuating. He wants payments for labour to be made by hourly units.

Vinoba's plans for India are the reverse of those of R.K. Patil, her chief planner. Patil wants more bigness, more dams and power plants, built with American aid. Vinoba wants more smallness, more wells and village production. He cannot wait for the big dams, not with the Himalaya glaciers shrinking and the rivers falling. He mistrusts foreign loans, such as Ambassador Chester Bowles is getting for India, because they promote bigness.

Vinoba is also against Nehru's pendulum policy of alternately taking pseudo-loans (actually gifts) from the United States—"begging," Vinoba calls it—and then demonstrating "independence" by backing Chinese Communist imperialism. He wants

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

India to drop rationing and encourage the farmer by a free market price. "If America and other countries give us grain, will they do so out of love or out of a desire to tie us down to their convenience? Shall we go to America for alms? No, friends. Let us worship Shrama Devata, the god of work, and ask him to give us food."

On the population problem Vinoba is an optimist. While the Indian Government openly pleads with the people to cut down their breeding (the present net increase is 40,00,000 annually), Vinoba says, "I do not believe India is overpopulated. In Japan the pressure of population on soil is four times greater. The remedy is not birth control, but in uplifting the living conditions. In Russia the prestige of parents rises with the number of children. The cry of less children is suicidal for the defence of your country."

Like Gandhi, Vinoba believes in putting India's idle rural hands to work at individual machines, especially the spinning wheel. He and all his followers, even on the march, spin at least one hour daily. But he does not hesitate to use a beaten-up truck to carry their bedrolls from one village to the next. "We shall disintegrate the mechine age, but only after we have drawn out all that is good in it." He believes India needs a great diffusion of small machines and a more decentralized system of production, based on the village, not the city. Planning must start with putting people to work, not machines.

Assaulted everywhere by supplicating share-croppers, Vinoba scolds as well as comforts them : "If you don't help yourselves, God won't help you. He can't shower food and clothing. His mercy can be manifested only in the form of rains on the fields. It is you who have to sow seed for food and cotton for cloth. If you go on snoozing after sunrise, how can you enjoy fully the warmth of the rising sun?"

His gospel of self-help often upsets his hearers. At a village in Madhya Pradesh, the villagers complained that deaths were increasing and asked him to wangle a hospital from the government. Vinoba told them that diet, not disease, was their trouble.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

"Give thanks to God that you have no hospital. Eat sensibly. Grow herbs and use them as medicine. If you start a hospital, your money will be drained to foreign countries through buying medicine. You'll lose your money and your health, too."

"I see the salvation of India," Vinoba says, "only through this double-edged weapon : performance of bodily labour and freedom from the lure of money. In it I see the acme of Gandhi's philosophy, a synthesis with Communism and an antidote against both Communism and capitalism."

Open-minded as a teacher, Vinoba draws upon practical farming and prayer about equally in formulating his doctrine. Though met everywhere by passionate edulation, he remains free of both delusions of grandeur and pride of poverty. When All-India Radio, the government's nationwide hookup, pleads with him for a long sermon, he gives them only two or three minutes. "The time is not yet ripe" he says. He won't take short cuts by air, "because my work would be lost in the air, and none get done on the ground."

Meditating out loud about his givers, Vinoba inquires, "Have they gone mad? What makes them part with their land, which is so dear to them? They have come to realize that revolution is imminent. They don't want the Indian revolution to be one of a kind with Russia and China. They realize that mine is the only way to bring about non-violent revolution. So they are voluntarily parting with their estates. Solve land, and you have solved all the problems of the world."

(George Weller)

Vinoba Bhave died on 16 November 1982 at the age of 87. He indeed contributed much for the upliftment of the socio-economic condition of the weaker sections of our society. A true Gandhian as he was, he was also a true friend of the Harijans. He was the founder of the Bhoodan Movement through which he collected and donated land to the landless. Rich tributes were paid to him by one and all. Several leaders collected at the Paunar Ashram where he breathed his last.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

VINOBA BHAVE CREMATED

Hindustan Times Correspondent

PAUNAR, Nov. 16—Amid cries of "Vinoba amar rahe" from the surging crowds, the mortal remains of Acharya Vinoba Bhave were consigned to the flames at 11.40 a.m. at the Gandhi Ghat today.

In a departure from the traditional Hindu practice, the funeral pyre was lit by Mahadevi, the adopted daughter of Vinobaji as the late Acharya had wanted women to get a status equal with men. Ashramites said Vinobaji was against women being relegated to the secondary status, and had desired that his last rites should be performed by women. The religious prayers that preceded the funeral were also led the women inmates of the Paramdham Ashram.

Present on the occasion of the funeral were Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Union Ministers R. Venkataraman, N.K.P. Salve, Vasant Sathe, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Maharashtra Chief Minister Baba Saheb Bhosale, and his Cabinet colleagues, State Governor. I.H. Latif, Karnataka Chief Minister Gundu Rao and a host of MLAs, MLCs and MPs.

Mrs. Gandhi arrived at the Paunar Ashram at 10.30 a.m. and was received by Union Minister of State for Shipping and Transport Sitaram Kesari shown present to receive her were Mr. Bhosale, Mr. Ramkrishna Bajaj and Vinobaji's secretary Bal Vijay Tembekar.

Exactly at 11 a.m. the funeral procession started. There was a lot of jostling on the specially raised platform. The people were perched rather dangerously on small rocks and were separated by small streams of water. Police had cordoned off the area, but people kept on breaking one barrier after another.

Later, lathi-wielding policemen were helpless onlookers as people huried something or the other at the pyre. The Government respected the wishes of the Ashramites and did nothing against their wishes.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

PTI, UNI add :

Inmates of the Ashram went as leaping flames engulfed the mortal remains of the Acharya.

"Satya-prem-karuna", "Jai Jagat" and "Ram Hari"—these words in Devanagari were written with flowers on the three sides of the pyre.

The Ashram inmates had yesterday declined a proposal for a "State funeral" made by the district authorities on behalf of the Maharashtra Government. They also chose to use only locally available babul wood, even though the district authorities had arranged for sandal wood.

They had wanted to carry out the last rites in the ashram premises, in our traditional simple way, but had to change our plans because of the Prime Minister's presence."

The Prime Minister's younger daughter-in-law, Mrs. Maneka Gandhi sat among the public on a rock behind the kalash along with her followers and well-wishers.

Police and security staff had a tough time controlling the surging crowds. Both policemen and the public had to balance themselves on the rocks, and some people slipped off and fell into the small stream.

After the cremation, Mrs. Gandhi returned to the Ashram and stayed there for a while with other leaders before going back to Nagpur and emplaning for Delhi.

The asthi (ashes) of Acharya Vinoba Bhave will be buried under the cot on which he slept in the Paramdhan Ashram.

Acharya's secretary Bal Vijay said this was being done according to Acharya's wishes.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, who had voluntarily given up food and medicines on Nov. 8 died at 9.30 a.m. on Monday.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Acharya Bhave, who had suffered a heart attack on Nov. 5, turned down even Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's appeal to resume nourishment and medicine.

Eminent Bombay cardiologist A.B. Mehta of the Jaslok Hospital, Bombay, who examined the Acharya at Paunar as late as on Thrusday had said that the Bhoodan leader could have been saved if he could be persuaded to take at least medicines. The Acharya had rallied to treatment immediately after the heart attack.

Acharya Bhave, who pioneered the anti-cow slaughter movement, was born on September 11, 1895, in Gagoda village of Mahrashtra's Raigad district. He look a vow of celibacy at the age of 10 and dedicated his services to the country.

Launching the Bhoodan Yagna in 1951, he travelled over 64,000 km on foot and collected mere than 60,000 hectares from landlords to be distributed among the landless poor. He also toured the then East Pakistan to propagate the movement.

Notable among his achievements was the surrender of 20 dacoits from the traditionally terror-stricken areas of Bhind and Moorena districts of Madhya Pradesh in 1960.

Acharya Bhave, who joined the Sabarmati Ashram in 1916, was made the head of the new ashram at Wardha by Mahatma Gandhi. He started another hermitage at Paunar later.

An active freedom fighter, he was named Mahatma Gandhi's first representative in the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1940. He remained underterred with his aim of serving the country though he was jailed during the freedom struggle.

VINOBA A TRUE GANDHIAN, SAYS ZAIL SINGH

New Delhi, Nov. 16 (PTI)—The President, Mr. Zail Singh, on Monday expressed deep grief at the death of Acharya Vinoba Bhave whom he described as a "saint" and a "stalwart from the generation of freedom fighters."

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

In a condolence message addressed to the Governor of Maharashtra, Air Chief Marshal I. H. Latif, the President said "I am deeply grieved to learn that. Acharya Vinobaji passed away this morning. Acharya Vinoba Bhaveji was held in the highest esteem by the nation as a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. He devoted his entire life to the realisation of the Gandhian ideals of live, truth, non-violence an sacrifice. His life was a source of moral and spiritual inspiration to the people."

The President hoped that the Acharya's life and preachings would continue to inspire future generations.

"In his death, the country has lost a stalwart from the generation of freedom fighters. He was a saint who left his mortal body at his own will. The passing away of such a saint is no an occasion for mourning, though his absence from our midst will always be felt."

"we can only pay our tributes by rededicating ourselves on the occasion to the high principles for which he lived. I pray to the Almighty that his soul may rest in peace," the President said.

The Vice-President Mr. M. Hidayatullah said the nation had received with deep anguish the news of the death of Acharya Bhave.

"The revered Acharya was a unique figure on the scene of social reforms in India".

"A true Gandhian, his anxiety, for the poor and the downtrodden led to the Bhoodan movement and his famous padayatra," Mr. Hidayatullah said and added that the reformation of dacoits was also mainly due to his influence.

Though bodily frail, in that physical frame was a soul that was mighty. Till the end of his life, his mind retained freshness of outlook and a desire to do something for his fellowmen. The like of him we shall see no more," the Vice-President said.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

UNI adds :

Mrs. Gandhi described Acharya Bhave as the "spiritual heir" of Mahatma Gandhi and invoked his blessings on the people of India.

She said the Acharya was deeply immersed in the ancient wisdom but was not a revivalist. He was well-read in all religions and had no use for any practice which could negate "true religion".

Mrs. Gandhi, who is now in Moscow to attend the funeral President Leonid Brezhnev, was conveyed the news of the Acharya's death over the hot-line.

Mrs. Gandhi in a message said : "Acharya Vinoba Bhave came to limelight when Gandhji chose him to be the first satyagrahi during the individual satyagraha, but he kept out of the rought and turnable of party politics. He interested himself in Gandhiji's constructive work."

"Acharya Vinoba Bhave later led Bhoodan movement which at a critical period in our national history helped to turn the country-side away from violence and created an atmosphere of co-operation."

Mrs. Gandhi said Acharya Bhave "viewed problems from the wider angle, sponsored Sri Shakti movement and acknowledged the owness of the world by his slogan 'Jai Jagat'.

He was deeply immersed in "our ancient wisdom, yet he was a revivalist. He was well read in all religions and had no use for practice which could negate true religion."

"His insistence that humankind's survival demanded a combination of spiritualism and science madd a profound impression on all who met him and is a message very relevant to the crises of our time."

Acharya Vinoba Bhave was in the long line "of our sages. May his blessings be with the Indian people", she added.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mr. P. V. Narasimia Rao, External Affairs Minister, expressed his "deep grief".

Mr. Rao, who is in Moscow with Mrs. Gandhi's party to attend Brezhnev's funeral said in a message he was "deeply grieved to hear the news of the passing away of Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

"Rarely has spirit of dedication and selflessness been so enshrined within the person of a single individual. He spanned several generations and give a spiritual dimension to the process of social change.

"As a humble Bhoodan worker, I feel a particular sense of loss. May we all be endowed with the inspiration to continue his mission. May his soul rest in peace". Mr. Rao added.

The Union Finance Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, on Monday described Acharya Bhave as a great patriot, a saint and the foremost Gandhian leader.

The Chemicals and Fertilizers Minister, Mr. Vasant Sathe, described Acharya Bhave as a "karma yogi" who brought about a "spiritual revolution" through his Bhoodan movement.

The Union Home Minister, Mr. P. C. Sethi, said that the country had lost "one more stalwart of the freedom. Moveement".

The Union Agriculture Minister Rao Birendra Singh, said the Acharya was a visionary and socio-economist with roots deep in the soil.

The Union Planning Minister, Mr. S. B. Chavan said "We have lost a person who was, carrying on the glorious traditions of Mahatma Gandhi".

The Union Irrigation Minister, Mr. Kedar Pandey said it was an "irreparable loss to the world and specially to India".

The Minister of State for information and Broadcasting,

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mr. N. K. P. Salve said in the death of the Acharya "not only the nation but the entire mankind has been improverished".

The Maharashtra Chief Minister, Mr. Babasaheb Bhosale described Acharya Bhave as "the heir to the old tradition of sainthood".

The Maharashtra Governor Mr. I. H. Latif said : "The life and the ideals of this great saint will continue to inspire generations of our countrymen".

The Gujarat Governor Mrs. Sharda Mukherjee said the Acharya was a great moral force whose philosophy was expressed in his life.

Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, BJP president said the real homage to Acharya Bhave would be respect his last wishes about cow protection.

The Chairman of the Gandhi Peace Foundation Dr. R. D. Diwakar said in Banglore that the greatest and the closest disciple of Mahatma Gandhi has disappeared from the world with the passing away of Acharya Bhave.

India has lost a saintly person in the death of Acharya Bhave, Mr. Morarji Desai said in Bombay.

"Vinobaji had devoted his entire life not only the the country but to all humanity" Mr. Desai said.

Karnataka Chief Minister Mr. Gundu Rao, in a message expressed profound grief at the death of the Acharya and said "a link with the Gandhian era has been shapped".

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. K. Vijaya Bhaskara Reddy, said to follow in his foot-steps and to strive sincerely to put his ideals into practice will be a true homage one can pay to him.

The Haryana Chief Minister, Mr. Bhajan Lal said : "Acharya Bhave stood like a rock to preserve the eroding faith in noble human values".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Darbara Singh said : "A great figure who had dominated this country's history for a long time has disappeared from the scene."

The Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister, Mr. Shivbhanu Singh Solanki said : "He lit many candles in huts of the landless people by helping them get land through his Bhoodan movement.

The Orissa Chief Minister, Mr. J. B. Patnaik, said that in the death of Acharya Bhave, the country had lost one of her noblest sons.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram said the country has lost a "foremost disciple" of Mahatma Gandhi who carried Mahatma's vision till the end of his life.

Mr. Chandrajit Yadav, Democratic Party President in his message said in Bhave's death, the Gandhian era had practically come to an end.

Mr. Charan Singh, Lok Dal (C) President said that the country has lost a "great soul".

Mr. Chandra Shekhar, Janata Party said Acharya Bhave symbolized what is glorious in our cultural heritage".

Bhoodan got over 1.6 m hectare land

New Delhi, Nov. 16 (UNI)—More than 16 million hectares of land was donated to the Bhoodan movement since its beginning on April 18, 1951.

According to data available with the Gandhi museum here, of the 1,677,711.6 hectares of land received ? by the movement as donation 514,294.2 hectares were distributed among the landless.

The data, compiled upto June 15, 1975, showed 440,560.4 hectares of land lying undistributed with the movement, launched by the Acharya to herald agrarian revolution in the country.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

The number of people, inspired by the idea of generously donating land for the landless, was found to be 285,044.

3-day mourning in Bihar

Hindustan Times Correspondent

Patna : The Bihar Government has declared a three-day state mourning on the death of Acharya Vinoba Bhave.

Flages flew half-mast and Government offices and schools remained closed today as a mark of respect for the departed bhoodan leader.

Puri : The Sankaracharya of Puri, Sri Niranjandeb Tirta has urged the Centre to impose a total ban on cow slaughter as a fitting tribute to Vinoba Bhave, adds UNI.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Chronology

1895, Sept. 11 :	Vinoba was born in Gagode village, Kolaba district, Maharashtra.
1903, :	Studies *Jnaneshwari* at the age of eight.
1905, :	Takes lifelong pledge of celibacy and national service, at the age of ten.
1907, :	Admission to a High School in Baroda.
1913, :	Vinoba passed Matriculation examination.
1914, :	Starts Vidyarthi Mandal at Baroda.
1916, March, 25 :	Leaves home for Varanasi.
1916, June 7 :	Vinoba joins Mahatma Gandhi at Kochrab Ashram, Ahmedabad.
1917, Mar. 6 :	Meets Lokmanya Tilak for the first time.
1918, June 25 :	Establishment of Sabarmati Ashram.
1918, Oct. 24 :	Passing away of Vinoba's mother Rukmini-devi.
1918-19, :	Tour in Maharashtra and Sanskrit studies at Wai.
1918, Feb. 12 :	Famous letter addressed to Mahatma Gandhi about his activities during one year's leave.
1921, April 8 :	Vinoba starts Satyagraha Ashram at Wardha in the garden of Jamnalal Bajaj.
1923, Jan. 1 :	The first issue of '*Maharashtra Dharma*' (Monthly), edited by Vinoba.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1923, April :	First imprisonment in connection of Flag Satyagraha at Nagpur.
1923, Sept. 3 :	Released from prison.
1924, Feb. 12 :	Shifts to the new Satyagraha Ashram building (now Mahila Ashram) at Wardha.
1924, June 18 :	Re-starting '*Maharashtra Dharma*' as a Weekly.
1924, :	Vinoba goes to Kerala for Waikom Satyagraha under Gandhiji's instructions.
1924, :	With Gandhiji at Delhi in connection with 21-day fast for communal unity.
1928, July 16 :	Commencement of *Kanyashala* at Wardha, under Vinoba's guidance
1928, July 19 :	Opens Jamnalal Bajaj's Lakshminarayan temple at Wardha for the Harijans.
1930, Oct. 7 : to 1931, Feb 6 :	Vinoba writes *Gitai*, Marathi translation of the Gita in verse.
1931-32 :	Campaign for the opening of wells and temples for Harijans in Wardha district.
1932, Jan. 8 :	Imprisoned in Dhulia Jail where the memorable 'Talks on the Gita' were delivered.
1932, July 14 :	Released from Dhulia Jail.
1932, Aug. 7 :	Starts several Ashrams in Wardha Tehsil.
1932, Dec. 25 :	Shifts to Nalwadi for village work.
1934, May 6 :	Establishment of Gramseva Mandal.
1934, June 10 :	Shifts to Kanya Ashram under Gandhiji's advice.
1935, April 1 :	Organizes first 'Khadi Yatra' at Deoli.
1935, July 1 :	Establishment of the Tannery near Nalwadi.
1936, May 18 :	Maharogi Seva Mandal is established at Dattapur for the service of lepers.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1938, Oct :	Vinoba improves his health at Pavnar, after serious illness.
1940, Oct. 17 :	Speech at Pavnar, as the first Satyagrahi.
1940, Oct. 21 :	Sentenced to 2 months' simple imprisonment.
1941, Jan. 17 :	Vinoba delivers an anti-War speech at Sevagram.
1941, Jan. 24 :	Sentenced to 6 months' imprisonment.
1941, July 14 :	Speech and arrest at Nalwadi.
1941, Dec. 3 :	Release along with other individual Civil Disobedience prisoners.
1942, Feb. 1 :	Presides over the first All-India Goseva Conference.
1942, Aug. 9 :	Arrested under 'Quit India' movement.
1945, July 9 :	Released from Seoni Jail.
1947, Oct. 29 :	Passing away of Vinoba's father, Narhari Shambhurao Bhave at Dhulia.
1948, Mar. 13-15 :	Constructive Workers' Conference at Sevagram.
1948, Mar. 30 :	Vinoba reaches Delhi on Pandit Nehru's invitation for helping Relief and Rehabilitation work.
1948, Dec. 16 :	Inauguration of Sarvodaya Exhibition at Jaipur.
1949, Aug. 15 :	First issue of '*Sarvodaya*', Hindi Monthly edited by Vinoba.
1949, Aug. 21 :	Vinoba addresses workers at 'Jinnah Hall in Bombay.
1949, Nov. 1 :	Doctors detect Vinoba's duodenal ulcer.
1949, Dec. 15 :	Inaugurates the World Pacifist Conference at Sevagram.
1950, Jan. 1 :	Initiates *Kanchan-mukti* programme at Pavnar.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1951, Mar. 8 :	Leaves for Shivrampalli, Hyderabad, for attending Sarvodaya Conference.
1951, April 15 :	Commencement of tour in Telangana.
1951, April 18 :	First *Bhoodan* at Pochampali village.
1951, June 27 :	Vinoba returns to Sevagram.
1951, Sept. 12 :	Leaves for Delhi on Pandit Nehru's invitation.
1951, Nov. 13-23 :	Discussion with Members of the Planning Commission at Rajghat, Delhi.
1952, Jan. 23 :	First Gramdan of Mangroth village in Uttar Pradesh.
1952, Sept. 7 :	Launches sanitation drive at Varanasi.
1952, April 13 :	Vinoba attends Sarvodaya Sammelan at Sevapuri where a resolution for collecting 25 lakh acres of land in *Bhoodan* was adopted.
1952, Oct. 23 :	Scheme of *Sampattidan* announced at Patna.
1953 :	Serious illness at Chandil in Bihar, followed by the Sarvodaya Sammelan.
1954, April :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Bodh Gaya, where Jayaprakash Narayan announced his *Jivandan*.
1954, April 18 :	*Samahvaya* Ashram is established at Bodh Gaya.
1955, March :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Jagannathpuri.
1956, May 14 :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Kancheepuram, South India.
1957, April 15 :	Vinoba takes the historic pledge at Kanya Kumari for solving land problem in India.
1957, May 9-10 :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Kalady.
1957, July 11 :	First announcement of Shanti Sena programme.
1957, Sept. 20 :	Gramdan Conference at Yelwal.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1958, May 29 :	Enters Pandharpur temple with a party consisting of several religious denominations.
1958, May 30 :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Pandharpur.
1958, Aug. 8 :	An important meeting of Sarva Seva Sangh at Chalisgaon.
1959, Feb. 27 :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Ajmer.
1959, April 14 :	Inauguration of Brahma Vidya Mandir (Pavnar) at Kashi-ka-Vas, Sikar in Rajasthan.
1959, May 22 ;	Vinoba enters Jammu and Kashmir.
1959, Oct. 1 :	Establishes Prasthan Ashram at Pathankot.
1959, Oct. 11 :	Worships at the Golden Temple in Amritsar.
1959, Nov. 11 :	Inauguration of All-India Literary Conference at Amritsar.
1960, April 18 :	Establishment of Vishwa-Needam Ashram near Bangalore.
1960, May 10-22 :	Twenty dacoits surrender to Vinoba in the Chambal Valley.
1960, Aug. 15 :	Commencement of Visarjan Ashram at Indore.
1962, Mar. 5 :	Establishes maitri Ashram in North Lakhimpur district of Assam.
1962, Sept. 5-25 :	Trip to Pakistan.
1962, Dec. 25 :	Vinoba's last meeting with Pandit Nehru at Nabagram in Bengal.
1963, Dec. 29 :	Sarvodaya Conference at Raipur.
1964, Feb. 12 :	First issue of *Maitri* magazine is published from Pavnar Ashram.
1964, April 6 :	Vinoba returns to Sevagram.
1965, Feb. 12-17 :	Fast at Pavanar Ashram in connection with language riots in South India.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

1965, Aug. 23 :	Vinoba leaves for Bihar in connection with Gramdan 'Storm' Campaign.
1966, June 7 :	Commences his '*Sukshma*' programme during his stay in Bihar.
1969, Oct. 25 :	Sarvodaya Sammelan at Rajgir.
1969, Nov. 3 :	Returns to Wardha for meeting Badshah Khan.
1969, Nov. 8 :	Joint statement issued from Sevagram over the signatures of Badshah Khan, Vinoba and Jayaprakash Narayan.
1970, Feb. 9 :	Addresses the National Seminar on "Gandhian Values in Indian Education" convened by the Ministry of Education, Government of India.
1970, June 7 :	Vinoba leaves Gopuri for Paramdham Ashram, Pavnar. On the same day he met Gandhiji for the first time at Ahmedabad in 1916.
1982,	Died on 16 November.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Glossary

Abhaya —Fearlessness.

Advaita —Non-dualism or monism.

Ahamkara —Egoism.

Ahimsa —Non-violence.

Akarma —Inaction.

Anasakti Yoga —Philosophy of non-attachment—A Commentary on the Gita written by Mahatma Gandhi.

Annapoorna —The goddess of food.

Ashram —Abode of a spiritual teacher, a centre of constructive work on Gandhian lines.

Athato Brahma Jijnasa —"Now, therefore, the desire to know the Brahma or the supreme"—the first aphorism of the *Brahma Sutra*, a treatise propagating the tenets of Vedanta.

Ayodhyakand —One of the chapters of *Ramayana*.

Bagis —Rebels.

Bapu —Father, as Mahatma Gandhi was affectionately called.

Bhagvat —An Epic glorifying the deeds of Lord Krishna, written by sage Vyas.

Bhajan —A devotional song.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Bhakta	—Devotee.
Bhakti	—Devotion.
Bhakti Yoga	—The Philosophy of Devotion.
Bhavana	—A feeling of devotion.
Bhim	—A son of King Pandu in the Mahabharat age, renowned for his strength. Bhim also implies 'gigantic'.
Bhoodan	—Gift of land.
Brahmachari	—Celibate.
Brahmacharyashram	—Leading a celibate life upto the age of 25 years, according to the code of Manu.
'*Brahmasutra Shankar Bhashya*'	—A Commentary on *Brahma Sutras* by Adi Shankaracharya.
Brahma Vidya Mandir	—A Temple or Institution for acquiring the knowledge of the Absolute.
Buddhi	—Intelligence.
Chakki	—Grinding-stone.
Chappals	—Slippers.
Charkha	—Spinning wheel.
Chitta	—Mind.
Chulaa	—Hearth.
Crore	—100 lakhs or 10 million.
Daan	—Civing of alms.
Dakshina	—A kind of sacrificial fee given to Brahmins at the end of a religious function.
Daman	—Self-control.
Danavas	—Dark gods, Demons.
Danda-shakti	—Legislative power of punishment.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Dan-patra —Document of land-gifts.

Dargah —The tomb of a Muslim saint.

Daridra Narayan —God as embodied in the form of poorest and lowliest human beings.

Darshan —Seeing a great man with devotion.

Dasbodh' —Poetic work by Samarth Ramdas, the Preceptor of Shivaji, Maratha ruler.

Daya —Compassion.

Deepak —Indigenous lamp with wicks.

Deva —Bright god.

Devanagari —The script in which Hindi, Marathi and Sanskrit languages are written.

Dharma —Sense of duty, Right conduct.

Dhrma Chakra Pravartana —Revolving the wheel of Dharma or Religion.

Dhunki —Carding-apparatus.

Dhyana Yoga —Profound meditation.

Dvaita —Dualism.

Ekadashi —The eleventh day of a fortnight of the lunar month, on which religious-minded Hindus observe fast and offe prayers.

Fakir —A mendicant, poor saint.

Ganga —The sacred river of India, Ganges.

'Gandhi Marg' —The official Quarterly of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi.

Gangotri —The origin of the holy Ganga in the Himalayas.

Ghani —An oil-press driven by human or animal power.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Ghee	—Clarified butter.
'Gita'	—The Song Celestial. Also known as Bhagvad Gita.
Gitai	—"Gita—the mother"—translation of the *Gita* by Vinoba in Marathi verse.
'Gita Pravachanen'	—Talks of the Gita.
'Gita Rahasya'	—Commentary on the Gita by Lokmanya Tilak.
Goras Bhandar	—A co-operative store in Wardha for selling cow's milk.
Goseva	—Serving the cow, promoting the welfare of cattle.
Grahasthashram	—Life of a householder from 25 years to 50 years, according to *Manusmruti*.
Gramdan	—Gift of the whole village-land.
Gramraj	—Village self-government.
Gram Sabha	—Village Council.
Gram Seva Mandal	—Village Service Association.
'Granth Sahib'	—The Holy book of the Sikhs.
Guntha	—One fortieth of an acre.
Gur	—Molasses.
Guru	—Master, Preceptor.
Gyan	—Knowledge, wisdom.
Hanuman	—Ardent worshipper and companion of King Rama, a mythological figure worshipped by the Hindu masses.
Harijan	—Lit. 'People of God'—this term was used for scheduled castes by Mahatma Gandhi.
Himalaya	—"Abode of snow". The highest mountain range, forming the northern frontiers of India.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Himsa —Violence.

Hiranyakashyapu —An agnostic king, who was not even prepared to hear the name of God. His son Prahlad was an ardent worshipper of the Divine. Hiranyakashyapu tried his best to kill Prahlad, but was himself slain by Lord Narsimha, an incarnation of God.

Hridayakunj —A building in Sabarmati Ashram, Ahmedabad, where Gandhiji resided.

Indriyas —Organs of perception and action.

'Isopanishad' —One of the Upanishads.

Jai Jagat —"Victory to the world".

Jana Shakti —Self-reliant strength of the people.

Jivandan —Life-dedication; gift of life.

Jnana —Knowledge.

'Jnaneshwari —Commentary on the *Gita* in Marathi by Jnaneshwar, an eminent saint and philosopher.

Jowar Chapati —Bread prepared from barley flour.

'Kadambari' —The immortal Sanskrit classic in prose written by Banabhatta in the seventh century A.D.

Kala Bhavan —School of Art.

Kaliyuga —The Dark Age.

Kanchan Mukti —Liberation from money-economy.

Kanya Shala —A school for girls.

Karma —Outward action.

Karma Yoga —The philosophy of action.

Karma Yogi —One who believes in the doctrine of Karma or action.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Kayakaram —Programme of action.

Khadi —Hand-spun and hand-woven cloth.

Konkanastha —Belonging to the Konkan region of Maharashtra.

Kranti —Revolution.

Kritayuga —A mythological golden age, when there was no evil.

Kritayugi —Born in Kritayuga, or the Golden age.

Kriya —Activity.

Lakh —100,000 or 1 million.

Lokanagari —A reformed Nagri script developed by Vinoba.

Lokaniti —Politics of the people.

Lok Sevak Sangh —An organization for the service of the people.

Lok-Shakti —Power of the people.

Lota —A small jug for taking water.

Magan-deep —A new type of hurricane lantern fabricated by Vinoba. It consumed local edible oil in place of kerosene, and was named as 'Magan-deep' in the memory of Maganlal Gandhi, a nephew of Mahatma Gandhi.

'Mahabharat' —A famous epic written by sage Vyas. It is an encyclopaedic work, narrating a war between Kauravas and Pandavas in ancient India.

'Maharashtra Dharma' —A Marathi journal edited by Vinoba.

Mahila Ashram —An institution for women.

'Mangal Prabhat' —A book written by Gandhiji, meaning "auspicious morning".

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

'Manu Smriti'	—Ancient Indian book on laws. It contains social, ethical and religious codes as laid down by sage Manu.
'Matru Devo Bhava'	—Let the mother be worshipped as god.
Mela	—Fair.
Moksha	—Emancipation.
Mukti	—Salvation.
Nai Talim	—Basic Education.
Namaz	—Prayers at a mosque.
'Nirbal ke bal Ram'	—"God is the real strength of the weak and the down-trodden."
Nirguna Bhakti	—Devotion to formless Supreme being.
Nishkama Karma	—Motiveless action.
Nityanai Talim	—Ever new education.
Nitya path niya	—Worthy to be studied daily.
Nyaya Sutra	—Aphorisms on logic by sage Gautam, one of the eminent philosophers of India.
Padayatra	—Journey on foot.
Panchayat Ghar	—The office of Village council.
Panch Parmeshwar	—The unanimous opinion of village representatives is the voice of Divinity.
Pandas	—Persons in holy centres who look after the convenience of the pilgrims.
'Patanjali Yoga-Sutra'	—A treatise written by sage Patanjali, containing the basic principles of Yoga Philosophy.
Patram Pushpam, Phalam, Toyam	—A leaf, a flower, a fruit and a little water as offerings to the Lord.
Pay ratio	—Loave of bread.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Pradakshina —Going round the idol of any deity in a temple.

Prahlad —*Vide* Hiranyakashyapu.

Prajapati —The Creator.

Prajna —Wisdom.

'*Puranas*' —Eighteen ancient Classics supposed to have been written by sage Vyas, giving an account of Indian history and mythology.

'*Quran*' —The Holy book of the Muslims.

Raghuvansha —A Sanskrit classic in verse by Kalidasa, describing the deeds of the Kings of Raghu dynasty.

Rajas —The quality of passion.

Rajniti —Conventional politics.

Ramayana —An Epic written by 'sage Valmiki in Sanskrit. It describes the deeds of King Ram.

Ram —Incarnation of God, as the son of King Dashrath of Ayodhya.

Ramdhun —Chanting the name of Ram or God.

Ramnama —Name of the Divine.

Ram Rajya —Rule of God.

Rashtriyashala —National School.

Rashtriya Vidya Mandir—National High School.

Rishi —A seer, sage.

Rukmini —Wife of Lord Krishna.

Sadhana —Penance, devotion.

Sadhan Shuddhi —Purity of the means.

Saguna Bhakti —Devotion to God incarnate.

Saiyam —Self-control.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Samadhi —A memorial construction containing portion of the ashes after cremation.

Sammelan —Conference.

Samsara —Universe.

Sampattidan —Donation of a portion of one's income or wealth.

Samyavad —Communism

Samya Yoga —The Philosophy of Equality, Sarvodaya—a special term coined by Vinoba for indicating a non-violent social order as against Communism.

Sandhya —Prayer or obtation to the Sun.

Sannyasi —One who renounces the world and becomes a saint.

Saranjam Karyalaya —A workshop for the manufacture of spinning wheels, etc.

Sarva-dharma Samabhava—Equal respect for all religions.

Sarvodaya Samaj —A society for the welfare of all.

Sattva —The quality of goodness.

Satva —Truth.

Satyabhama —Another wife of Lord Krishna.

Satyagraha —Adherence to truth; civil non-violent resistance.

Satyagraghi —One who offers satyagraha.

Seva —Service.

Sevaks —Constructive workers.

'Shakuntalam' —Another masterpiece by Kalidasa—a poetic drama on Shakuntala.

Shanti —Peace.

Shanti Sena —Peace Brigade.

Shanti Sainik —A soldier of peace.

Shanti Seva Dal —Peace Service Corps.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Sharad Purnima —Full-moon day in early winter.

Shastras —Hindu Scriptures.

Shiksha Mandal —Education Society.

Shivaji Jayanti —Birth-anniversary of Shivaji, the great Maratha ruler.

Shivaratri —Night of a popular fast festival in honour of Lord Shiva.

Shloka —A poetic metre used in Sanskrit literature.

Shramdan —Gift of physical labour.

Sootanjali —Offering of hand-spun hanks of yarn.

Sthitaprajna —A person of steadfast mind.

Sthitaprajna Darshan —The characteristics of a person who has attained steadfast wisdom as described in the last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the Gita.

Sukshma —Subtle, supramental power.

Sulabh Gramdan —Gramdan made easy.

Surya Namaskar —A physical exercise at sunrise.

Svadhyaya —Self-study.

Swadeshi —Exclusive use of articles [made in one's own country.

'Swarajya Shastra' —Grammar of Politics; a treatise on self-government.

Swayamvara —A type of marriage in which the bride selects her own bride-groom.

Takli —A small spindle for hand-spinning.

Tamas —Inertia, darkness.

Tapas —Practising austerity.

Thali —A mental-plate used for taking food.

Toofan —Storm.

Tulsi —A sacred plant, leaves of which are also used for medicine.

Tulsidas's 'Ramayan' —Tulsidas, a Hindi poet-saint in 16th century, wrote the epic poem *Ramayan*. It is a very popular book among the masses of North India.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Tunai	—Hand-carding of cotton.
'Upanishads'	—Ancient Sanskrit books propounding Vedanta Philosophy.
Vairagya	—Detachment from worldly affairs.
Vaman	—Dwarf—One of the incarnations of God in the form of a dwarf.
Vanaprastha Ashram	—According to the ancient tradition of India, the third stage of human life between 50 years and 75 years, during which one is supposed to preach to the community and give it the benefit of one's spiritual experiences.
Vande Mataram	—Salutation to Mother India.
Vasana	—Passion, lust.
Vedanta	—Culmination of Vedic Philosophy, believing in one Divine power pervading everything.
'Vedas'	—Lit. knowledge. They are the oldest books of Sanskrit literature. They are four in number—Rigveda, Yajurveda, Samadeva and Atharvaveda.
'Vicharpothi	—A book containing the stray thoughts of Vinoba.
Vidyarthi Mandal	—An Association of Students.
Vikarma	—Participation of the mind in external action.
Vinoba Kuti	—A cottage in Sabarmati Ashram where Vinoba resided.
Vishva-Manush *Vishva-Manava*	—'A citizen of the world'.
Vishwaroop-darshan	—Vision of the cosmic form of God.
Yagya	—Offering or sacrifice.
Yamaraj	—The god of death.
Yoga	—The art of spiritual living.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Speeches and Writings of Vinoba Bhave A.I.C.C. Papers.
Contemporary Newspapers.
Indian Annual Register by N.N. Mitra, relevant volumes.

Secondary Works

Andrews, C.F., *The Indian Problem*, Madras, 1921.

Banerjea, S.N., *A Nation in the Making*, London, 1929.

Bipan Chandra, *Rise and Growth of Economic Nationalism in India*, Delhi, 1966.

Birla, G.D., *In the Shadow of the Mahatma : A Personal Memoir*, Bombay, 1968.

Bose, S.C., *The Indian Struggle, 1920-42*, New York, 1964.

Chintamani, C.Y., *Indian Politics Since the Mutiny*, Allahabad, 1947.

Das, C.R., *India for Indians*, Madras, 1921.

Fischer, Louis, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, London, 1962.

Gandhi, M.K., *Hind Swaraj*, Madras, 1921.

———, *An Autobiography*, Ahmedabad, 1965.

Iyer, C.S. Ranga, *India in the Crucible, London*, 1928.

Kohn, H., *A History of Nationalism in the East*, London, 1931.

Kripalani, J.B., *Gandhi : His Life and Thought*, Delhi, 1970.

Mehrotra, S.R., *Towards Indian Freedom and Partition*, New Delhi, 1979.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Mody, H.P., *The Political Future of India*, London, 1908.
Nehru, Jawaharlal, *An Autobiography*, London, 1936.
Pal, B.C., *Swaraj : The Goal and the Way*, Madras, 1921.
Pradhan, R.G., *India's struggle for Swaraj*, Madras, 1930.
Rajendra Prasad, *An Autobiography*, Bombay, 1957.
Segal, Ronald, *The Crisis of India* London, 1965.
Sharp, Gene, *The Politics of Non-Violent Action*, Boston, 1972.
Tendulkar, D.G., *Mahatama* 8 volumes.
Woolacott, J.E., India on Trial, London, 1929.

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Index

Ahmedabad, 6, 139, 167
Ahilya, 138
Arjuna, 24, 28
Assam, 150

Bajaj, Jamnalal, 12, 15, 130, 135, 139ff, 144, 184-85
Bajaj, Jankibehn, 168
Banaras, 181
Banaras Hindu University, 5
Baroda, 1, 28, 165, 182, 184, 191
Bengal, 172
Berlin, 117
Basant, Aanie, 3, 5
Bhagwandeen, Mahatma, 185
Bharati, 199
Bhima, 24
Bhave, Narhari Sambhurao, 182
Bhoodan Movement, 49ff, 124ff
Bihar, 40, 49, 145, 150, 170
Bombay, 3, 32, 182
Bonaparte, Napoleon, 174
Buddha, Lord, 75, 150
Buddhism, 198
Burma, 69, 150

Calcutta, 32
Central Asia, 69
Ceylon, 69
China, 69, 116, 119, 150, 172, 175, 180
Civil Disobedience Movement, 14, 125

Czechoslovokia, 275

Dacca, 129
Danda-Shakti, 148
Dandi March, 13, 161
Daridra Narain, 181
Delhi, 41, 144, 150, 161, 168, 181, 186
Deoli, 128, 204
Desai, Khandubhai, 15
Desai, Mahadev, 14, 187, 195-96
Dhotre, Raghunath, 12
Dhulia, 14, 156

Eisenhower, President, 174
Eknath, 25, 185
Ellsworth, Bunker, 154
England, 174
Europe, 70

Flag Satyagraha, 12
Gagode, 1
Gandhi—Irwin Pact, 134
Gandhi, Kesho, 12
Gandhi, M.K., 5-6, 10ff, 26, 40-1, 53, 55, 73, 114, 116, 126ff, 135, 138ff, 154, 158, 161, 164ff, 179, 182, 184, 188-89, 192ff, 203ff
Ganges, 4-5, 20, 49
Gaya, 150, 168
Ghaziabad, 156
Gita, 122, 128, 130, 134, 143, 183ff, 195

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Gramseva Mandal, 127, 131ff
Gram Swaraj, 50, 146
Gujarat, 151
Guruvayoor, 185
Gyander, 182

Harkare, Dwarkanath, 12
Hastings, Lord, 5
Himalayas, 3, 49
Himsa, 148
Hyderabad, 49, 161, 176, 201

Individual Satyagraha, 200
Indian National Congress, 164, 171
Independence Day, 114
Indo-China, 69
Iran, 120
Islam, 198

Jammu and Kashmir, 150
Jamuna, 24
Janaka, 23
Japan, 69
Jayaprakash Narayan, 143
Jnaneswar, 174
Jordon, 117

Kale, Gopalrao, 3, 15
Kaka Kalelkar, 1 94
Kerala, 164
Khadi, 60ff
Khandesh, 14, 182
Kheda, 11
Kisan Mazdoor Praja Party, 160
Kochrab Ashram, 6
Kolaba, 182
Korea, 117
Kothari, Manilal, 15
Kripalani, J.B., 141, 155
Kumarappa, J.C., 180

Lakhimpur, 150
Land-Gift Mission, 181
Lohia, Rammanohar, 170
London, 154

Madalsabehn, 126
Madhuban, 173
Madhya Bharat, 176
Madras, 9, 32
Madhya Pradesh, 176
Magsaysay Award, 154
Maharashtra, 13-4, 151, 194, 182-83 204
Malabar, 29
Mao-tse-Tung, 116, 180
Mazzini, 3
Meos, 186
Mirabehn, 179
Mysore, 55

Nagpur, 12, 32, 134-35, 205
Nalwadi, 125ff, 136
Namdev, 182
Nanda, G.L., 15
Nehru, Jawaharlal, 14, 41, 46, 146, 151
Noakhali, 161

Oliver Lodge, 78
Orissa, 59, 145

Pakistan, 150, 199
Pandavas, 21
Patanjali, 116
Patna, 117
Pathankot, 150
Pavnar, 114, 135-36, 140ff, 149-50, 167, 182, 185-86, 204, 206
Peshwa, Madhavarao, 174
Phadke, Mama, 7, 11
Podar, Rameshwar, 15
Poona, 182
Prahlad, 11

Quit Indo-Movement, 205

Raipur, 57, 172
Rajendra Prasad, 41
Ramdas, 182
Ramayana, 121, 128

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

Round Table Conference, 14
Rukminidevi, 2
Russell, Bertrand, 154

Sabarmati Ashram, 13, 134, 139
Sampatti dan, 53
Serva Seva Sangh, 16, 52, 141, 147, 175
Sarvodaya, 49ff, 145, 150, 170ff
Seoni, jail at, 205-6
Shankaracharya, 29, 70, 115, 174
Shanti Sena, 61ff
Shivaji, 12, 182
Sinha, S.K., 170
Sikhism, 198
Sudama, 19

Tagore, Rabindranath, 121
Tandon, P.D., 159-60
Telengana, 161-62, 186, 199, 201
Tibet, 69, 175
Tilak, B.G., 3, 17, 183
Travancore, 13, 185
Tukaram, 134, 182
Tukoji, Maharaj, 194
Tulsidas, 115, 182

United Provinces, 156, 171, 181, 194
United States of America, 70, 173, 175
Union of Soviet Socialist Republic, 173, 180

Vallabh swami, 12
Vaman Pandit, 2
Vasto, Lanza Del, 155
Vedanta, 72
Vellore, 205
Vietnam, 175
Vindhya Pradesh, 170, 176
Visarjan Ashram, 150
Vishnu, Lord, 137

Wai, 9
Wardha, 13, 114, 125, 128, 132, 135, 139-40, 167, 185, 187, 203
Weller, George, 206
World War, Second, 176, 185

Yelwal, 171
Yervada, 138
Young India, 295

Zakir Husain, 115

G.M. College of Education
Raipur, Bantalab
Jammu
Acc. No 6426
Dated 17.6.03

G.M.C.E.J
5435

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab,Jammu

Dr. S.R. Bakshi is an eminent scholar of Modern Indian History and is the author of several works on Indian nationalism and freedom movement.

ISBN 81-7041-594-5

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant

Gandhi Memorial College Of Education Bantalab Jammu

OF ALLIED INTEREST

		Rs.
Documents of Civil-Disobedience Movement	*S.R. Bakshi*	350
Documents of Non-Cooperation Movement	*S.R. Bakshi*	500
Gandhi & Champaran Satyagraha	*S.R. Bakshi*	150
Indian Freedom Fighters-Struggle for Independence (Set of 44 Vols.)	*S.R. Bakshi*	16000
Studies in Modern Indian History	*S.R. Bakshi*	350
Patel Peasantry & the Raj	*S.R. Bakshi*	150
India Before Independence	*A.L. Carthill*	400
The Rise of British Power in India	*M. Elphinstone*	600
Afganistan's Struggle for Resurgence	*Satish Ganjoo*	400
Dictionary of History	*Satish Ganjoo*	200
Indian Nationalism and British Policy	*Courtenay Ilbert*	700
Condition of India	*V.K. Krishna Menon*	600
Freedom Struggle in Jammu and Kashmir	*Santhosh Kaul*	500
Nationalist Movement in India	*Verney Lovett*	350
Warran Hastings—The First Governor General of India	*G.B. Malleson Col.*	600
Rammohan Roy & Progressive Movement in India	*J.K. Majumdar*	700
Raja Rammohan Roy & the Last Moghuls	*J.K. Majumdar*	500
Raja Rammohan Roy-Letters and Documents	*Majumdar & Chanda*	700
Paradoxical Nehru & Indian History	*Som Nath Madan*	300
British Connection with India	*K.T. Paul*	250
Historical Geography of the British India	*P.E. Roberts*	500
The History of Mankind (Set of 3 Vols.)	*F. Ratzel*	3000
India in the Crucible	*C.S. Ranga Iyer*	500
The Early History of India	*F.F. Rudoll et al*	200
British Intervention in Central Asia and Trans Caucasia	*T.R. Sareen*	300
Archaeological and Typographical Explorations in Chinese Turkistan	*M.A. Stein*	300
Towards Swaraj	*S.K Sharma*	500
The Brahmo Samaj Movement and its Leader	*V.K. Sharma*	300

ANMOL PUBLICATIONS
4378/4B, Ansari Road, Darya Ganj
New Delhi-110 002
Phone : 3261597

CC-0 Agamnigam Digital Preservation Foundation,Chandigarh.Funding by IKS-MoE-2025-Grant